

## THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

by Rev. Tom Statler

June 9, 2020

Writing is a significant means by which I process things that are going on around me and within me. By putting words to a page, either by longhand or a word processor, I can examine my thoughts and emotions on issues and events. As an example, I've done a lot of journaling about my transition out of the Navy and our move to Lake Lotawana. The same is true with all that we have seen in the news over the past few weeks. As your new pastor, I felt you should know my thoughts on the racial turmoil—all of which is taking place on top of the personal and social stressors already in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I want to begin with a parable.

*A man was soundly sleeping in his bed one night. Suddenly, some strange sounds from downstairs woke him up. The muffled sounds continued, and he crept to the window of his bedroom, only to see men carrying out some of his belongings. He grabbed his cell phone and dialed 911. After the 911 operator asked, "What is your emergency?" the man frantically whispered that his house was broken into and his property, and perhaps his life, were at serious risk. To his shock and surprise, however, the 911 operator responded, "Sir, I understand that you are being burglarized and that you don't feel safe, but it not just about your house. All houses matter."\**

What the 911 operator is saying is true. Indeed, all houses matter; no house should be burglarized. But in the homeowner's circumstance, the 911 operator's statement, while true, is not relevant to that circumstance. It does not help the homeowner feel safe as he watches his belongings get carried out of his own house and fears for his life.

The same logic applies to the use of "All Lives Matter" in response to that of "Black Lives Matter". Indeed, all lives matter, and it is a true statement, but it misses the point. In other words, it is not relevant to the situation. Worse, it can be used to obscure or deny the collective pain of blacks whose ancestry did not choose to come to North America, unlike my German ancestry who willingly came to America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in order to have better opportunities in life. So, if I am uncomfortable with the phrase "Black Lives Matter" as a middle-aged white man, that tells me something if I'm truly listening to the Holy Spirit within me. God's small voice is telling me to look in the proverbial mirror first before looking at others. I must first look inward and understand for myself the social corrosiveness of white privilege to which I may be blind. That has been my life-long struggle which I willingly share with you, and it has been brought back to my consciousness during these weeks of turmoil. So, these days especially, I continually ask God to "open my eyes, that I may see, glimpses of truth thou hast for me."

As believers in our risen Lord, we are not left in despair. The good news (literally) is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is one component of that proverbial mirror into which we can look and see who we can truly be—a disciple of Jesus Christ put on this earth to love and serve all the world. In that capacity, we are blind to skin color or any other humanly constructed divide in society. This can happen with our full acceptance of God's grace—a love

which we in no way earned. It is God's unmerited love for all of us (not just some of us) that gives us hope in dark times, including those we are experiencing now. When we then allow ourselves to learn from our brothers and sisters of other races on our joint walk with Christ, we shall overcome our learned biases (however implicit or explicit they may be) and truly be the Body of Christ—one ultimate and multi-colored congregation in God's kingdom, on earth as it is in heaven.

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\* The parable that I've written was inspired by a similar analogy in an article explaining the difference between the phrases "Black Lives Matter" and "All Lives Matter". For another United Methodist perspective on the inner struggle that has manifested itself outwardly, I recommend reading the following article: <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/confronting-ridiculous-logic-of-white-supremacy>.



**On Going:** Les Case, Wade Davis, Richard Fuerst, Winnie Fuerst, Harvey Geary, Michael Hatfield, Mike McMillin, Steve Raymond, Nancy Rowe, Don & Phronsie Wood

**New Beginnings:** Pastor Snyder & Family, Pastor Tom and Jennifer Statler

**Missions:** 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***

## WEEKLY UPDATES AND REMINDERS

**Reminder!**

***This Sunday is Pastor Tom Statler's first day of Worship.**  
Please come and join our church family as we open our arms  
and hearts wide open to him and his wife Jennifer.*

Updates



This is the last Sunday we will be collecting diapers size 4 and 5 for Hillcrest .

We have collect over 10 items and would love it if we could hit a goal of 20 by the end of the month.

***I know we can do it and more!***



As we welcome Pastor Tom and Jennifer, we must remember that they have a lot of new names and faces to remember so let's do our part and everyone wear your name tag. I have arranged them in order on the boards by the door for easy access and if you are in need of one please contact me and I will have Connie Brown get you one made.



We would like to remind everyone of the church policy in regard to Covid-19 and wearing a mask. Our church made the decision that everyone over the age of 5 would wear a mask while in attendance at church. This is not only for your own safety but also is the correct way to protect others we may come in contact with while we worship together. We would also like to remind everyone that we are still going by the social distancing requirements requested by our state and have also posted signs with reminders of how we can all do our part to keep ourselves and our church family safe and healthy. Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness during these trying times.

# June 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>7 Services</b> <b>8:00 &amp; 10:00</b>	8	9	10	11	12	13
<b>14 Services</b> <b>8:00 &amp; 10:00</b>	15	16	17	18	19	20
<b>21 Services</b> <b>8:00 &amp; 10:00</b>	22	23	24	25	26	27
<b>28 Services</b> <b>8:00 &amp; 10:00</b> <b>Welcome Pastor</b> <b>Tom &amp; Jennifer</b>	29	30 Missions Meeting 7:00				