

# THE MESSENGER



*"For all to know and share the Love of Christ"*

October 2020

The Newsletter of First United Methodist Church Surgoinsville, TN  
Elaine Ruth, Pastor Church: 345-2279

## *Pastor's Corner*

### **THE BEATITUDES: MATTHEW 5:1-16**

*When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:*

*3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

*5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

*6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

*7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*

*8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

*9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

*10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

*13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.*

*14 "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. 15 No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

In August, we began working our way through the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes are part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' most famous teaching. The Beatitudes were Jesus' response to the time he had spent among the people. He had walked among the people. He had seen their pain and their need. He had seen how the crowds ran to him because they had heard that he could help, and they had nowhere else to go for help.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus was saying, "I know what you are going through. I know how defeated and desperate you feel, but don't give up hope. God's grace is here for you. You are blessed when you realize that your help comes from God."

There are life lessons in the Beatitudes. However, the Beatitudes are not simply a list of things we are supposed to be doing. They reflect how Jesus brings heaven to us. They are an illustration of what a redeemed world looks like. With all the craziness that surrounds us, we need to remember that Jesus came to accomplish God's redemption of the world. The Beatitudes are a message of hope. God is at work in the world.

The very first word in Jesus' very first sermon recorded in Matthew's Gospel is the word "blessed" (Matt 5:3). Being blessed is very different from being lucky. Being blessed means that someone intentionally has done something good for you. Luck implies random good fortune. The Beatitudes tell us that God intentionally is doing something good for us.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus is telling us that the kingdom of heaven is not just a place we escape to when we die. The kingdom of heaven is here. Sometimes, when we hear Jesus' words about "the kingdom of heaven," we think he is talking about the afterlife. As a result, we think of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of heaven coming near as meaning that through Jesus we now have access to heaven after we die. For Jesus, though, the kingdom of heaven was very much about life on this side of the grave.

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## *Pastor's Corner Continued*

Life in heaven after life on this earth is one very important aspect of the kingdom reality, but it is not the entire context. What Jesus was referring to when he spoke of the kingdom of heaven coming near, and what his original audience would have pictured when they heard him say that the kingdom of heaven had come near, was more immediate.

When Jesus talked about the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, he was talking about God's reign, activity, and work on the earth. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus begins his ministry by announcing that the "the kingdom of heaven" is near. Jesus was saying that the kingdom of heaven is happening now. And when heaven "is happening" on the earth, lives are changed.

I do not want to give the impression that what comes after this life does not matter. It does. And for those of us who have lost loved ones, it is especially precious to know that we will see them again. We look forward to eternity in the presence of God. But Jesus wanted us to understand that we are not abandoned by God in the here and now.

When Jesus preached this sermon of blessings, he was promising blessing to all those who love God. The Beatitudes are an invitation to come into the grace God offers.

The kingdom of heaven coming near through Jesus makes a difference. The blessing that is the kingdom of heaven has real-life effects: bodies healed, relationships restored, dignity renewed, false assumptions about God shattered. The kingdom of heaven coming near makes a difference in the quality of people's lives—now.

Jesus came to earth with the good news of the kingdom of heaven. Through him God brings about transformation. This is what the kingdom of heaven is about. One of the things Jesus would later teach his disciples to pray for was for things to be on earth as they are in heaven (Matt 6:10). In heaven tears are wiped away; there is no poverty, sickness, suffering, addiction, hatred, racism, oppression, sin, guilt, or shame. In teaching us to pray for things to be on earth as they are in heaven, Jesus is calling us to join his movement, prayerfully working for the transformation of our lives and our world and refusing to allow the evil in the world to triumph.

Heaven is not limited to a reality found on the other side of the grave. It is something we can experience on this side of the grave. Through Jesus the kingdom of heaven happens. It's closer than we think and more accessible than we realize. It's where we belong.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Elaine



## **Heaven on Earth Sermon Series**

**October 4, Week 8: The Road To Peace / Focus Scripture: Matthew 5:9 & Isaiah 65:17-25**

When the kingdom of heaven "happens," it makes a difference for the peacemakers – those who are contending for God's wholeness – God's shalom – in our violent, fragmented world. Conflict seems inevitable, but it is possible to live in a way that embodies God's peace, living as children of God on earth, indeed bringing heaven to earth.

**October 11, Week 9: True Grit / Focus Scripture: Matthew 5:10-12**

When the kingdom of heaven "happens," it makes a difference for those who are persecuted because of righteousness – for those who are done wrong precisely because they are doing right. We should not seek out persecution but know that it will find us if we are living according to the values of God's kingdom.

**October 18, Week 10: Make Something Happen / Focus Scripture: Matthew 5: 13-16**

As we align our lives with these realities, we become as salt and light in our world – difference-makers. But we are only as salty and enlightening in our world to the degree that we reflect the nature of the King and his kingdom as described in the Beatitudes.



We will begin a new Bible study Wednesday, October 7 at 6:30 p.m. Please note that **this is not** Dinner & Devotions but Bible study only. If you plan on participating in this study, please contact Pastor Elaine.

### District Charge Conference

The District Charge Conference will be on Sunday, October 11 at 3:00 p.m. at First Broad Street UMC.



On Sunday, November 1, we will celebrate the memory of loved ones who passed away during the past twelve months with a special worship service. If you have a family member you would

like to remember during the service, please give their name to Jean Keirsey or Becky Bowman by Sunday, October 25, and invite members of your family to attend and participate in the service.



10/12  
Bob & Shirlee Bury  
Thomas & Gina Skelton

10/13  
Dillion & Kayla Cradic

10/19  
John & Lora Williams



#### Mondays at 6:30 p.m.

Boy Scouts meet in the Ministry Center

#### Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.

Webelos Scouts meet in the Ministry Center

#### Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

#### Thursdays at 6:00 p.m.

Girl Scouts meet in the Ministry Center

#### PRAYER PAGE

As you pray this week please remember:

Gerri Pierce  
Vicki Linderman  
Bethany Wade  
Peggy Kerley  
Ed Bryant  
Amber Randolph  
Rheanne Hanson

*Names on the prayer list will remain there for a month. To keep a name on the prayer list after a month, please contact the church office.*



10/1  
Judy Brice

10/2  
Tim Gardner

10/7  
Wayne Thurman

10/8  
Bill Cummings

10/9  
Danny Thurman

10/11  
Jack Pierce

10/15  
Jennie Bader

10/17  
Rob Childress

10/19  
Jessika Birchfield  
John Williams

10/26  
Austin Rowland

10/27  
RudyAVIS



### Jimmy Luster Christmas

With December quickly approaching, it is time, once again, to start planning our annual Jimmy Luster Christmas for the Children party. Members of our congregation sign up to shop for a child to provide them with gifts at Christmas. If you are comfortable to do shopping for Jimmy Luster Christmas, please notify Pastor Elaine or Gina, in the church office.

You may email or call.

[secretaryumc@bellsouth.net](mailto:secretaryumc@bellsouth.net)

423-345-2279

### Financial Report

We appreciate the continuing financial support by our church family during these difficult times. Even though we have reduced salaries and other expenses to minimal levels, we still have other fixed expenses.

#### Offering Report for September

Received towards the budget:	\$2,315.00
Youth Ministry	\$300.00

#### Offering Report for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

Total Offering Received	\$30,560.50
Designated for Specials	\$425.00
Received towards the budget	\$30,135.50

Thank You!

Phil Pierce