



Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Sunday, January 31st, 2021

Dear Lake Toxaway UMC family and friends,

My pastoral letter this week is an example of a devotional I have written in response to the Gospel lesson. I want to offer an example using a format I will suggest in an announcement. I pray daily for all of you and the special needs we all carry in our hearts!

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:21-28

1:24: And he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God."

I grew up in a home with a mother who suffered from a terrible mental illness. More importantly, I grew up in a family of deep faith in a God who was ultimate in power and authority. I never remember a time when we were not praying for my mother's healing and restoration.

In the 1960s and 1970s, many people held interesting theological understandings of mental illness. I remember some Christians telling us my mother was demon possessed. There was a tragic event in church where she interrupted a worship service and a horrifying scene erupted. What I remember most other than the usual embarrassment was the kind and loving response of our church community who followed the lead of the minister and went into prayer with the organ and piano quietly playing in the background as several individuals came to help my father get my mother to a hospital.

Biblical stories of individuals possessed with demons are often understood and interrupted as stories of people suffering with mental illness. I think this is one interruption. I also have come to know there are demonic forces in the world. Rather than wanting a "right interpretation," I hear the powerful words of a man who was ill saying, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?"

The question is answered with healing! My mother never received a miraculous healing, but God worked in her illness and led each of my siblings to a deep faith in God's constant presence with us. We learned to let go of our fears about her illness, to surrender ourselves to God's transforming power in Christ in the redeeming work of our lives as we lived with her illness and loved her. That was a healing story for children in our generation!

Prayer: Lord, surround individuals and families who deal with mental illness. Bless those professionals who work with these individuals and families. May they all find strength, guidance and ultimate healing in Christ Jesus. Amen.

I gladly serve among you. I am praying you will volunteer to write a devotional during lent!

Marcus

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Community Worship Service
Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, January 31st**

9:30 A.M. Livestream link: <https://youtu.be/Wb-bB2ukedk>

PRELUDE

Steal Away to Jesus arr. Charles Callahan

GREETING

By this I have known the presence of the Lord:

in the rising of the sun,

in the smile of another's face,

in the touch of a hand

or the sound of a laugh,

in the scent of a flower

holding the promise of spring.

By this I have known the power of the Lord:

in the healing of hurts,

in the forgiveness of sin,

in the giving of gifts beyond all expectation,

in the shower of love

that comes from God's Son.

Let us give thanks to the Lord with all of our heart!

Let us worship our God, whose presence and power endures forever!

HYMN #139

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and most merciful God, we give thanks that you know us and love us. Help us, through the power of your Holy Spirit, grow deeper, wider, and fuller in our knowledge and understanding of your ways. Help us, through the bestowal of your divine Wisdom, bring others closer to you and to your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

- 18:15 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet.
- 18:16 This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die."
- 18:17 Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said.
- 18:18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command.
- 18:19 Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable.
- 18:20 But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak--that prophet shall die."

Psalm 111 (Please read responsively the text in bold)

- 111:1 Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.
- 111:2 Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.**
- 111:3 Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.
- 111:4 He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the LORD is gracious and merciful.**
- 111:5 He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.
- 111:6 He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.**
- 111:7 The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.
- 111:8 They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.**
- 111:9 He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name.
- 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.**

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

- 8:1 Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.
- 8:2 Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge;
- 8:3 but anyone who loves God is known by him.
- 8:4 Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "no idol in the world really exists," and that "there is no God but one."
- 8:5 Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth--as in fact there are many gods and many lords--
- 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.
- 8:7 It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.
- 8:8 "Food will not bring us close to God." We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.
- 8:9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.
- 8:10 For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols?
- 8:11 So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed.
- 8:12 But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.
- 8:13 Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

Mark 1:21-28 (Please stand for the Gospel)

- 1:21 They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught.
- 1:22 They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.
- 1:23 Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit,
- 1:24 and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God."
- 1:25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!"
- 1:26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.

1:27 They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching--with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."

1:28 At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

L: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

P: Thanks be to God!

SOLO - MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE MARGARET S. VANCE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Let us offer our silent confessions.)

You, God, are known for your wonderful deeds— your mercy, forgiveness, and love. You have shown us the power of your works time and time again. And yet, we are slow to comprehend; we refuse to acknowledge your gifts; we act self-sufficient, as if we provide ourselves everything we need, when we know in our hearts that you are the author of life. Forgive us, we pray. As we confess our sins, in thought, word or deed, may your redemptive presence flood our lives that we may praise your name forevermore. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God offers redemption to people of every generation, making new life possible for everyone.

Repent, believe in the gospel, and be healed!

In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH *(Alternate for Season of Epiphany)*

We believe in God,

the creator of all things,

the giver of life and breath.

We believe in Jesus Christ,

born Emmanuel, God with us,

baptized and revealed the most beloved Son of God;

he sought to heal humanity by taking our brokenness upon himself,

suffering for us,

dying for us

and being raised from the dead for our sake

***and for the sake of all the world.
We believe that he will come again.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
continually poured out refreshing our lives,
leading us into a new day,
ever birthing the church, the body of Christ in the world.
This Spirit is our constant companion and counselor of truth
reminding us
of the gift of faith,
the ever presence of God
and the promise of eternal life.
Thanks be to God! Amen.***

GLORIA PATRI (UMH #70)

***Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen. Amen.***

OFFERING

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

OFFERTORY

Meditation Robert Hebble

DOXOLOGY

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.***

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God of power and wisdom, we give you our eternal thanks for the gift of your Son, who came not only to save but to teach us about your kingdom and how we might live, readying ourselves for that kingdom. He taught with authority, and if we listen, we will live a life of generosity, mercy, and compassion. Bless what we give this day and help us be faithful in the use of all our resources, that we might live like those anticipating your kingdom. In Christ, we pray. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #451

Be Thou My Vision

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed with permission)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Trumpet Tune Robert J. Powell

STAFF & LAY VOLUNTEERS

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, marcus61dodson@gmail.com

Organist: Charlie Steele: cwsorgan@comporium.net

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314, administrator@laketoxawayumc.org

Lay Leaders: Barbara Kline: 828-862-5585 and Paula Markert: 828-553-9434

Audio/Visual for Livestream Chair: Andy Harvill

Soloist/Vocalist: Jacolyn Campbell

Liturgist: Carole Guffey

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lenten Devotional Writers Wanted! Request from Pastor Marcus WE NEED 40 VOLUNTEERS FOR THE 40 DAYS OF LENT!

First, here is a tutorial on writing a devotional:

- 1) Chose a scripture passage or ask to have one assigned. Here is an example: 1 John 4: 7-21. You list that as the reading for the day.
- 2) Chose a phrase or word that is speaking to you in the text. If I were writing a devotional, I might focus on verse 7: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." Share a personal story of why this passage speaks to you. I might write a story about the love of special people in the Christian communities where I have lived and how their love has helped to shape me into the person I am. Others might write a poem or tell a recent story of how God has worked in your life.
- 3) Conclude your devotional with a brief prayer that you write. (If your devotional was about one of your parents, you might write a prayer for parents who are engaged in the important work of raising children today.)

(My pastoral letter this Sunday is an example of a devotional utilizing this format. You might choose to write a poem, hymn, etc.)

Nancee Salyer and Scott Walter have volunteered to coordinate this effort. Nancee will coordinate the calendar. Scott will serve as an editor and Saunders will post the devotionals on our newly designed website: laketoxawayumc.org

Please do not hesitate to volunteer and thus not cause me to have to nudge you. You can contact **Nancee at nsalyer331@aol.com** and Scott at **scotlaw@aol.com**. I hope the response is so good we might have some days with 2 devotionals!

I am excited about this spiritual discipline as a congregation and the personal growth we will experience as well as the sense of community we will find it reading each other's devotionals. I have prayed the Holy Spirit will be busy "nudging" many you with a "yes" to this pastoral request.

Faithfully and in His service,
Marcus

Scholarship Committee needs volunteers to interview students

Are you excited about education and helping future student scholars? Volunteer interviewers are needed to help identify LTUMC student scholars for 2021-2022. Please reach out to Cathie Fussell at linguafrog@gmail.com or 910-572-2167 to learn more.

Administrative Council Meeting

The Administrative Council will meet on **Friday, February 12th at 9:00 AM**. If you are a member of the Council, you will receive a Zoom Invite. If you are not a member and would like to attend the meeting, please email Tom Blackstock or Saunders Grommesh as these meetings are open to all members, but only members have a vote if actions are required. You may e-mail Tom at Tom.Blackstock@gmail.com or Saunders at administrator@laketoxawayumc.org.

PRAYER CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY

Please pray for Linda & Kent Garner, Cathie Fussell's sister, Rachel, her nephew, Chad, her cousin Roger and his wife Judy, Chad & Anne Zimmerman, Thomas Blackstock, Cathie Fussell's nephew, Jeff Tilley, Marty Young, Madison Coleman & the Jeter family, Tony Austin and Frank Hardin.

Please continue to pray for Rev. Evelyn Owen-Patterson and her son. Evelyn is the pastor of the Selicia UMC, so we also need to pray for the congregation. They were in a bad car accident and is hospitalized with serious injuries.

Please continue to pray for those who have had the death of a loved one in the recent weeks and months. Please pray for those with illness and upcoming surgery.

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty 139

1. Praise to the Lord, the Al - might-y, the King of cre - a -
 2. Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so won-drous-ly reign -
 3. Praise to the Lord, who doth pros-per thy work and de - fend
 4. Praise to the Lord, who doth nour-ish thy life and re - store
 5. Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me a - dore

tion! O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and sal -
 ing bears thee on ea - gle's wings, e'er in his keep - ing main -
 thee; sure - ly his good - ness and mer - cy here dai - ly at -
 thee, fit - ting thee well for the tasks that are ev - er be -
 him! All that hath life and breath, come now with prais - es be -

va tion! All ye who hear, now to his tem - ple draw
 tain - ing. God's care en - folds all, whose true good he up -
 tend thee. Pon - der a - new what the Al - might-y can
 fore thee. Then to thy need God as a moth - er doth
 fore him! Let the a - men sound from his peo - ple a -

near; join me in glad ad - o - ra tion!
 holds. Hast thou not known his sus - tain - ing?
 do, who with his love doth be - friend thee.
 speed, spread - ing the wings of grace o'er thee.
 gain; glad - ly for - ev - er a - dore him.

Be Thou My Vision

451

Unison

1. Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2. Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
 3. Great God of heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

naught be all else to me, save that thou art.
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!

Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
 thou and thou on - ly, first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.