



Mossy Creek United Methodist Church

March 9, 2023

MOSSY CREEK MESSENGER

Food for thought from J

Last week, I shared in my sermon on the Beatitudes, that I had never delivered a sermon specifically on these verses because I had never felt confident enough in my own understanding of them to preach them, with conviction, from the pulpit. In fact, it was only recently, as I was re-reading Matthew in preparation for preaching through that gospel in 2023, that I began to see these particular verses in a new light. You see, I had always read the Beatitudes as, mainly, a long-term consolation for enduring conditions like those listed in the passage: poverty of spirit, mourning, persecution. But as I read them again and considered them in the light of what we know about the overarching message and purpose of Matthew's gospel, I began to see these "blessings" differently – as immediate and long-term rewards for adopting the right and Christlike attitude toward the world, life, and God.

While I am excited about this fresh understanding God has placed on my heart around these beloved verses, I am also saddened that many people look at the entirety of our Christian faith the same way I had been viewing the Beatitudes – as a consolation prize, after we die, for living a life of austerity and self-denial. We often think of the Bible and its teachings as a burdensome rule book to be followed lest we offend God's sensitivities in some way. This can lead to a view of eternal life in heaven as motivation, and perhaps our only reward, for the perceived, arduous challenge of living our earthly life by these rules. But the more we consider the context and the contents of all Jesus's teachings, including the Sermon on the Mount, the clearer it should become that the reward Jesus promises throughout his life is more than just a far-off promise of eternal life. Rather, it is a message that tells us, our eternal life can begin right now, with all the blessing and rewards outlined in passages like the Sermon on the Mount.

The key to this eternal life is changing, first, the way we think about the world around us and our place in it, and second, the way we live and interact with God and our neighbors based on these changes in our attitudes. Thankfully, Jesus outlines the way to this change - love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love our neighbor as ourselves - as the heart of his teaching. Blessed are we when we realize and live by what this means; that life is not all about us and our immediate comfort and desires. Rather, our most rewarding and satisfying lives await when we prioritize giving glory to God and caring as much for the lives of all God's children as we do about our own.

May we finally embrace the full and joyful message of Jesus and enter into eternal life – here and now.

do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on...But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Matthew 6:25, 33

******Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead 1 hour this week******

WORSHIP NEWS

Raising the Bar!

This week's sermon will continue to look at what it takes to be a disciple of Christ and the high bar Jesus sets for us in his famous Sermon on the Mount. Come learn more about this important teaching of Jesus on how we can participate in God's kingdom.

Never Miss a Sunday

If you can't worship in person, you can watch our worship services on the Mossy Creek UMC Facebook page. Simply click on the link below to worship live or watch later at your convenience. **Be sure to introduce your Facebook friends to our church and the gospel message by sharing our online worship with them.**

<https://www.facebook.com/mossycreekumc>

CONGRATULATIONS

...to Paul and Bee Fain on the birth of their new daughter – Mabel. Praise God for this miraculous gift of new life.

CHURCH BUSINESS

Church Council

Our Church Council will have its first meeting of 2023 on Wednesday, March 15th, at 6:00 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall. We ask all members of Church Council to make every effort to attend, and all church members are also invited to come learn more about the business and ministries of the church.

Technology Update

If you have watched any of our live streamed worship services on Facebook lately, you will have noticed significant improvements in the video quality, such that our online worship experience is now something we should all want to share with our friends and neighbors. Especially as we enter Lent and prepare for Easter, if all of us who are regular users of Facebook will commit to sharing our weekly worship service with our Facebook friends, we can increase, drastically, the number of people who are exposed to the message of the gospel, through Mossy Creek UMC, each week. I hope you will consider joining me in this new practice in the weeks ahead.

Check out our Updated Website

Our Mossycreekumc.org website is being upgraded, complete with a fresh, new look and important updated information about our church. We hope you will take a minute to look over the website and then utilize it as an important resource for keeping up with church activities and events or referring friends and neighbors who might want to know more about our church. You can click on the link below to view:

<http://www.mossycreekumc.org>

DISCIPLESHIP/FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Change in Date for March Ladies Fellowship

Because of a conflict with our upcoming Church Council meeting, our Ladies Fellowship group will meet next Thursday, March 16th at 5:00 P.M. at the Cottage Kitchen.

Read the Bible in a Year

Week 32

Day 1	-	Hosea 1-3, Matthew 16
Day 2	-	Hosea 4-6, Psalm 58, Matthew 17
Day 3	-	Hosea 7-10, Matthew 18
Day 4	-	Hosea 11-13, Mathew 19
Day 5	-	Hosea 14, 2 Chr 26-27, Psalm 61, Matthew 20

Gifts

Supporting the church with our tithes and offerings is necessary for the life of the church and as an important spiritual practice for growing as a disciple and exercising our faith in God's providence. Fortunately, there are several ways for you to give at Mossy Creek. In addition to weekly offering during worship, contributions can be placed in the box outside the office marked "Sally," they can be mailed to the church at PO Box 557, Cleveland, GA 30528, and they may be made electronically by clicking the "**donate here**" button of the church web site. Thank you for your continuing financial support of our church.

Christian Education Opportunities

Sunday School – 9:00 AM every Sunday

We have classes for children of all ages that focus on providing age appropriate and foundational lessons about the Bible, its main characters, and the fundamental life lessons they hold for us today.

Our Choir Room class is currently reading C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*. We would love to have you join us Sunday mornings at 9:00 A.M in the choir room.

The Fellowship Hall class offers an opportunity for group prayer, fellowship, and spiritual devotion using such resources as the Upper Room. The class welcomes anyone wishing to engage in these important spiritual practices.

The Young at Heart class meets in the room adjacent to the church office and follows the traditional Cokesbury Sunday School curriculum.

Bible Studies and Small Groups

The Tuesday Bible study group is continuing an in-depth study of John's gospel. We meet every Tuesday at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Next week we will be discussing chapter 17. It's never too late to get involved in serious Bible study, and we hope you will consider joining us in studying God's word from John's gospel.

Our United Methodist Women are currently studying Shannon Bream's book, *The Mothers and Daughters of the Bible Speak*. Their next meeting will be on Monday night, March 13th at 6:00 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall.

The United Methodist Men meet for breakfast on the second Sunday of each month to share food, fellowship, and a time of spiritual devotion. Their next meeting will be March 12th at 8:00 A.M. at in the Fellowship Hall.

Our Ladies Fellowship Group meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

Children are our Future...

...but we need volunteers to work with our children on Sunday mornings and throughout the year, as we seek to grow disciples for the future of the church and God's kingdom. If you have a gift for working with and teaching children, don't wait to be asked to use your talent for God's kingdom. Call the office or talk to J to volunteer.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Financial Report

General Fund – Through February 2023

- 2023 YTD Receipts	\$39,631.00
- 2023 YTD Expenses	\$39,919.00
- Net income/(loss)	(\$ 288.00)

Building Fund – Through February 2023

- 2023 YTD Receipts	\$ 27,339.00
- YTD Balance	\$ 46,118.00

Recent Attendance

	<u>In-person</u>	<u>Facebook views</u>
Mar. 5, 2023	92	46
Feb. 26, 2023	109	254
Feb. 19, 2023	86	33
Feb. 12, 2023	119	61

March Birthdays

3/2	-	Sally Crowe
3/3	-	Doug Head
3/6	-	Mike Rogers
3/7	-	Lora Everette
3/8	-	Randall Campbell
3/9	-	Lily Kostulakos
3/10	-	Ella Blair
3/11	-	Jon Kostulakos
3/13	-	Laurene Sosebee
3/14	-	Hazel Fain
3/15	-	Connie Campbell
3/20	-	Mike Dorsey, David Hollingsworth
3/21	-	Grant Keene
3/29	-	Allen Head

March Anniversaries

3/27 - Brad and Vicky Hunt

NEW PRAYER NEEDS AND CONCERNS

- Noah Shavers
- Donna Stockwell
- James Free
- Madison Biggers
- Family of Henry Tipton

BUILDING UPDATE

New Building Available for Limited Use

While we await the last steps in completing our new building and receiving our final Certificate of Occupancy, the building is now available for limited use by our members. If you would like to reserve the building for an event or activity, please contact the church office to inquire about availability.