



Where is God?

**Pastor Cathe
Evins**

“Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!’ (Genesis 28:16 NRSV)

How is it with your soul these days? Are you sensing the presence of the Lord in your current circumstances? Are you committed in your prayer life and practicing daily “alone time” with God? Or are you feeling a bit unsettled in all the uncertainty of our times and wondering where God is in all this? Perhaps you’re feeling a mixture of all the above. And that’s okay!

There is a story in Genesis about a dream that Jacob had. His father Isaac told Jacob to leave home and journey to the region of Haran to find a wife. On his way there, Jacob stopped for the night to sleep. In his dream, Jacob saw angels ascending and descending a ladder from heaven to earth. But more importantly, the Lord appeared to him and said this, “Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go.” The Lord knew that Jacob needed to hear that. Traveling from his home to a strange place to begin a new stage of his life, and seemingly alone, it would have been easy for Jacob to forget the larger purpose of his life and live in fear. The fact that the Lord was with him in every step and had a definite plan for his future should give meaning and confidence to all of us.

I’m convinced that especially when we are in strange places and uncertain circumstances with an unknown future (just like the place Jacob was in), the Lord wants us to know, beyond any doubt, that He is with us and will “keep us”.....wherever we go. Wherever we are. Whatever might come. No matter what we are going through. We need to hear that and believe it as much as Jacob did!

Well, when Jacob woke up, his first words were, “Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!” I assure you, that the Lord is in this place and these times with us, even though we may not know it or sense it. He has promised and He is faithful. Thanks be to God! Blessings, Pastor Cathe

Moving Forward by Going Forward

Ever since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, my biggest challenge has been how to maintain and sustain church financial resources without having a physical worship service and collection each week.

We have been blessed with the financial support of the congregation, and we are grateful that people have taken the time to remember our church. When the pandemic first started, people were very generous with their support and giving.

The church also applied for and received a federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) grant, which helped pay staff and preschool teachers’ wages.

We were able to continue with our mission with the help of a PPP grant. Because of the PPP grant and people continuing to support the church, we have been able to maintain and continue our programming in addition to our virtual church services, Bible studies, and Zoom meetings.

Now, we have exhausted all resources we received from the PPP grant, but of course we still have monthly expenses and we still need to pay the bills.

Many parishioners give their offering when they attend Sunday Worship Service. Now that they are not physically attending services, the habit of donating has temporarily fallen away.

Here are ways you can give to your church without physically attending church service.

Give by EFT (Electronic Fund Transfer)

Give with Your Phone with phone app called Tithe.ly

Give an Online Donation with Pay Pal via church website (Contact Church Office for Additional Information)

Bonnie Dixon

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Articles may be submitted to office@fumcseguin.com*



Pastor Ray Perales



Texas Ramps Project Update

To the Transformed and Transforming, We have finished moving at last. It has been quite a process for us, and now begins another phase: making the changes we want to make in our new home. Moving from one home to another always brings not only reflection, but consideration. We discover that we have more than we thought we have and evaluate whether we should keep them.

It really is the same when it comes to spiritual changes as well. Specifically I mean spiritual growth, but growth does not occur without change. For that change to happen, we need to evaluate what we are holding on to, why we are doing so, and whether we can let go.

We can hold on to things from our childhood, both good and bad. Either way, they can hold us back, preventing us from growing in faith. The same goes for adolescence and young adulthood. We can cling to past hurts, therefore, and leave no room for forgiveness. We can cling to past successes and leave no room for improvement. The point is not to forget, as memory is one of our greatest teachers. Instead, we need to leave room in our lives for what God has in store for us.

Just this past Sunday, I preached about God's vision for us. It is interesting that the text pertained to Jacob's travel to find a wife, a period of transition. Vision is supposed to lead to change, to improvement, or else it is pointless. In that case, it is time for a new vision. Had Jacob remained where he was, then there is no "Beth-El," the encounter does not occur, and it is never declared, "You are my God." The change required the vision, but the vision required a change. Consider this: is there anything you are holding on to right now that is not leaving room for God's movement in your life? What will you do to make that space for God to act?

Being Changed for Christ,
Pastor Ray

July marked the one year anniversary of First United Methodist Church of Seguin's involvement in the Texas Ramps Project. During the last year, FUMC volunteers built 13 new ramps for families in need. Those ramps totaled over 500 feet using just over 350 hours of volunteer time. One other interesting note is that when we started with the program a year ago, Texas Ramps Project had a backlog of nearly 20 ramps. Several of them had been waiting for ramps for over 2 years. At this time, the backlog is virtually gone – the next ramp FUMC builds will clear that backlog.

To start off year two, the volunteers from FUMC built a 45' ramp for a Vietnam veteran who lives a little east of Seguin. The ramp was built the morning of July 10th. The weather turned out much better than expected as we had cloud cover for nearly the entire build time. We had 9 workers who started early, and finished in just under 3 hours. Mr. Delannoy

came out for the 1st hour to watch us work, but then he must have decided we weren't that exciting – or it simply was getting hot. So he went back inside. When we went to the door at about 9:45am to ask him out for a picture, he was totally surprised that we were already finished. So he asked his wife to come out and look as well. He was all smiles and gave us a "two thumbs up" approval rating. He even quipped that now that he had a better way out of the house, he was going to have to actually leave when his wife wanted to shoo him outside. He also commented that now he could put his car right at the end of the ramp to minimize the distance to get into his car.

We are also making great progress in setting up the new warehouse space for the The Ramps Project to help all the build teams in Guadalupe County. We have most of the facilities set up and the first order of lumber is in the works. So hopefully we'll be up and running in August.



Habitat for Humanity Update

While July continued to be a time of uncertainty, one thing was certainly consistent - you can always count on the crew at the Habitat build site to keep building. We had to limit our community volunteers again after we had someone come on site - then a few days later test positive for COVID. But we kept moving forward and were able to complete the house on Bowie Street by the end of July – the Dedication ceremony was held on July 25th.

The home was dedicated to Jack Linden and the keys handed over to Bianca Munoz and daughter Zerenity. The amazing part of this build was that with all the build interruptions and limited number of volunteers due to COVID issues, we finished this house with only one additional week needed over the normal schedule. A huge chunk of the credit goes to the core volunteers who worked extra hours when allowed and maintained a very steady pace to get the job done. We also must give credit to the 11 high school students and 2 chaperones from "The Ethel Walker School" in Connecticut. The efforts of those young ladies back in March greatly helped to put us several weeks ahead of schedule .

As well as completing the Bowie house in July, in late June we also had the Dedication for the house on Newton St. This was the house we built last fall/winter. Regretfully we were not able to close on it earlier. So in less than a month's time, we had two house dedications.

Also worth noting, the GVHFH is currently accepting applications for home ownership July 7th through August 31st. Please help us spread the word! You can visit the website (GuadalupeValleyHabitat.org) for the application or call 830-401-0422. And of course, there are always opportunities to shop, donate, or volunteer at the GVHFH store at 256 W. Court St. The store also has new hours – the Re-Store is now open Tue-Sat from 10:00am to 5:00pm. As well, if you have household items in good condition that you cleared out of your attic during our extra time at home – think about donating to the GVHFH.



Year-to-Date Financial Report June, 2020	
Donations	\$430,353.00
Expenses	\$392,125.00
Donations Exceed Expenses by:	\$38,228.00
Checking Account Balance	
Beg. Balance as of 1/1	\$52,710.00
End. Balance as of 6/30	\$90,938.00



Pastor Melissa Lind
Associate Pastor for Youth & Young Adult Ministries

There is no doubt that we are living in changing times, uncertain times. With all that we are going through right now I find comfort in scripture. Psalms 130:5 “I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word, I put my hope.” Through prayer and scripture God has given us the tools to get through these challenging times.

It seems as though everything is being turned upside down. When will life return to normal? At this point do we even remember what normal is? Joshua 1:9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” God will never abandon us. He is walking right beside us as we walk through these uncertain times. Through Christ we will find serenity and new life in what lies ahead.

Every day we get this new beginning and a fresh start. We get a chance to accept and grow into the changes that lie ahead. This change is a gift Jesus has offered us. But change is not always easy, and we do not like it. It can be scary and uncertain; so, we fight it. We fight against the very change that can reshape and redefine who we are. We question and deny the change that can give us peace and joy, bettering our lives. Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” This reminds us that through Jesus we have hope and New Life.

When I look at what is going on around us,

whether it be globally, nationally, locally, or individually, I think about a forest fire. Our world may be falling apart due to this pandemic: loss of job, divorce, financial struggles, addiction, or numerous other things that may be causing change in our lives. But just like in a forest fire God is there! God will find beauty and new life in the middle of the chaos and mess. The fire may decimate all the mature growth, but after the fire is put out and things have settled you can begin again to see the beauty of life. Small seedlings begin to push through the fertile ash, wildflowers begin to bloom and wildlife returns. God takes death and breathes life back into it. Isaiah 43:19 “ See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” God’s ability to make beautiful things out of us is limitless.

Our lives are changing whether we want them to or not. So, we can accept and grow into these changes that are being offered to us or we can fight them and be miserable. We cannot live in fear or hide from what is happening. We must be brave and diligent in our efforts to accept this changing world and know that God will be in the midst of it all. For God’s love is perfect, always there and offered to each and every one of us at no cost. All we have to do is accept it. Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” We may not know what lies ahead but we can be certain that God’s love will never fail us.

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