



First Church of Lucedale

A Global Methodist Congregation

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Notes From the Pastor's Desk . . . *February, 2024*

I am thankful for the last few days. The Lord has given me a vision of the holiness we are to pursue as a congregation. In the vows of ordination, a Methodist pastor is asked if they are going on to perfection in love. We answer "Yes!" The more difficult question to answer is "Do you expect to be made perfect in this lifetime?" We are expected to answer affirmatively.

Christian perfection is a greatly misunderstood and ignored doctrine. It does not mean absence of sin. Matthew 5:48 records Jesus saying "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." How is this possible? We are not God.

The context for Jesus' statement is the Beatitudes. The verses immediately preceding Matthew 5:48 help us to understand the meaning of our Lord's words.

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'
44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? (Matthew 5)

Jesus would not issue a command that is unattainable. Our lack of confidence is not to be an excuse for failing to strive. As I said in the sermon Sunday, "We have been part of a denomination of low expectations and we are a congregation that has embraced low expectations." We fail to attain because we do not strive in the confidence that God's grace is sufficient. Jesus loved His enemies. He hated evil instead of tolerating it because He loved those oppressed by sin. We make peace with the enemy saying, "I will compromise or ignore if you leave me alone." The Enemy promises and then begins to press for more compromise until we forget who we are and to whom we belong.

Over the next several weeks beginning February 18, the first Sunday in Lent, I will preach on living and loving like Jesus. Join in this pursuit of holiness in heart and life that is the life of a disciple of Christ.

Your Brother in Christ,

David

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Children and Youth News . . .

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How many of you have enjoyed the delicious coolness that comes from a water bottle on a hot summer day? I have. Taking that first sip of cool water from that plastic bottle

makes all the difference in the world. Then some of us take that same bottle that just brought us refreshment and press it. Sometimes it is pressed so hard it looks useless - disformed, un-useable? Yet, if you see that same pressed bottle months later. Once it has gone through the recycling process, it is new again and ready to pour itself out all over again.

2 Corinthians 4:8-10 states (NIV) We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

We are not crushed. We are not defeated. We are not abandoned. The pressing that the enemy would try to bring to us is meant to crush us. The perplexing issues we face every day, the questions of why are meant to put us in despair. The battles we fight, the people who rail against us make us feel abandoned. When the enemy pushes us down, we don't want to get back up; yet, within us we carry the beauty of Jesus - His resurrection, His insurmountable unbelievable power. Our Savior, who still FIGHTS and WINS FOR US is the ultimate recycler. In this World, where there is so much against us, we feel all these negative words in this scripture but that is the enemy whispering in our ears. Gods states WE ARE NOT CRUSHED, WE ARE NOT IN DESPAIR, WE ARE NOT ABANDONED.... WE ARE LOVED, FORGIVEN, PRECIOUS, PRICELESS, WARRIORS, VICTORIOUS, CHOSEN AND RECYCLEDby the ONE who gave His all for us. So, if today the enemy has come to whisper in your ear that your sickness, your trial, your money problems, your hurt, your pain is going to overtake you, quote 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 out loud and remember you are not crushed... you are recycled to be used again for the pouring out of the Master. What the enemy has meant for evil, God will turn around for your good. WE ARE OVERCOMERS BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB AND THE WORD OF OUR TESTIMONY.

COMING UP . . .

FEBRUARY 14: ALL-CHURCH VALENTINE'S BANQUET

FEBRUARY 25: SENIOR SAINTS LUNCH HOSTED BY CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

FEBRUARY 28: ALL-CHURCH SKATE FROM 6 TO 8 PM - \$7.00 PER PERSON

MARCH 4: MOVIE NIGHT OUTSIDE - 5:30 FOOD / MOVIE 5:30

Annie Hillman, Youth Leader
601-508-9988
youth@firstchurchoflucedale.com

Greetings, I hope everyone is having a fantastic start to a new year!

The Youth have been working hard to fundraise money for the Snowbird trip that is coming up May 27- June 1. If anyone would like to donate to help send the Youth on this amazing trip, please contact Annie Hillman.

As of right now, the Youth are planning several more fundraising opportunities and a fun trip to the Uncle

Joe's Skating Rink on Wednesday, February 28

with the Children's Church (6:00-8:00 PM / \$7 per person).

I am excited to get to see both groups interact with each other and experience this opportunity together. To the Church Family, thank you for all your support in helping the Youth!

--Annie Hillman 601-508-9988
youth@firstchurchoflucedale.com



COMING SOON



VBS



2024

June 17-20

**Kids & Youth Wednesday
Snack Supper in February:**

- 7 Jeff and Jennifer Mathis
- 14 All-Church Valentine Banquet
- 21 Lee and Linda Roberts
- 28 Ernest and Eileen Ward

**Thanks for serving our
Kids & Youth!**

Announcements, Thank you! . . .



Jeff Bates will bless us with his witness and music **February 9 and 11 (Friday and Sunday)**. Jeff Bates is a best selling country music artist. Friday's concert will benefit the **Church's Food Pantry**. The price of admission is a canned good. Donors have paid all expenses related to his

travel and honorarium. Bates will share Gospel music with us on **Sunday, February 11**. Jeff Bates fell on hard times during the late 1990's. "After signing a contract with Warner-Chappell Publishing, Bates developed a methamphetamine addiction in late 1999. To feed the drug habit, he sold everything he owned and then resorted to stealing, including a guitar from his friend Kenny Beard. On March 14, 2001, he was arrested for drug possession and grand theft. After rehabilitation and jail time, he was given a second chance and signed to RCA. The song "One Second Chance" was inspired by this part of his life." (Wikipedia). You will want to hear what the Lord of his second chance has done!

Invite your friends for Friday's benefit serving our brothers and sisters in need and return Sunday morning at 10am for a gospel music concert!

Please join me in thanking Scott Stradtner for his work in securing Jeff Bates and securing sponsorships.

--Brother David



"He Lives!" **March 31**
10 AM



Your Church Council met the evening of Sunday, January 28. We discussed the possibility of returning to a Combined Service with blended music (contemporary and traditional) with Sunday School at 9am and Worship at 10am. We want to hear from you. Please contact chair Jeff Howell or pastor David Newton with your thoughts.

Please be in prayer for us as we seek the Lord's will for First Church of Lucedale! The Council will meet again in February to make a decision.

January 2024

Dear Lucedale First,
These past 9 years in Honduras have been quite the adventure. We could not have made it without the support from you and others. Praise God that He doesn't expect us to "go" alone. You have been such a blessing to us as we served in Honduras.

"Thank you" is not adequate, but please know we are truly grateful. May God keep blessing and growing you.

Charity and Brian Scott

Memorials, Thank You's, Announcements . . .

In Loving Memory, gifts have been given. . .

In Memory of Payton Dudley, Sr.

a gift has been given to First Church of Lucedale by Mary Sue Dudley

In Memory of Jurlean Cooper

a gift has been given to First Church of Lucedale by Jim and Carol Glawson

In Memory of Kay Grafe

gifts have been given to First Church of Lucedale by Mike and Donna Bragg, Mavis Dungan, Jim and Carol Glawson, The John Grafe Family, Lee and Tonya Harbison, Ann Hebert, Betty Henderson, Jeff and Melinda Howell, Faye McNeill, Ronnie and Janice Miller, Sheila Sellers, Jack Ware

In Memory of Dave Lollis

gifts have been given to First Church of Lucedale by Jim and Carol Glawson, Lee and Tonya Harbison, Ann Hebert, Jeff and Melinda Howell, Marla Howell, Esther Kirkwood Circle, Faye McNeill, Ronnie and Janice Miller, Sheila Sellers

In Memory of Jim Corley, Carolyn Elsteroth

a gift has been given to First Church of Lucedale by Nancy Corley

In Memory of Jeremy Malone, Dave Lollis, Kay Grafe, Buddy Varnadore

gifts have been given to First Church of Lucedale by Lee and Lisa Hedegaard

In Memory of Virginia Havard, Eugenia Howell, Payton Dudley, Ed Evans, Kay Grafe, Stanley Eubanks, Dave Lollis

gifts have been given to First Church of Lucedale by William and Joan Reid

In Memory of Ricky Josey, Kay Grafe, Dave Lollis

a gift has been given to First Church of Lucedale by Robert and DeWanda Platt

Our Christian Sympathies are extended to the Families of:

Kay Grafe who passed away Saturday, January 13. Her Homegoing Service was held at First Church of Lucedale on Tuesday, January 16. Please continue to remember Roy and the rest of the family in your prayers.

Bennie Breland (*Frankie Massey's brother-in-law*) passed away January 19. Please keep the family in your prayers.

Dave Lollis who passed away Friday, January 19. His Homegoing Service was held at First Church of Lucedale on Wednesday, January 24. Please continue to remember Dimple and the rest of the family in your prayers.



Thank you to my dear church family for all the many acts of kindness during my recovery from surgery.

The cards, calls, food and especially the prayers were so special! God is so good that I am a part of this great group of people!

Love to you all,

Gayle Gill



We welcome the newest member into our Congregation. She is Rita "Stephanie" Amidon!!!

Thanks for Serving in February:

8:30 Communion Servers:

Jeff & Melinda Howell, Kayla Broome

11:00 Communion Servers:

Lee & Lisa Hedegaard, Judy Wilder

8:30 Scripture Readers:

4th Misty McDonald

11th Combined Service/Jeff Bates

18th Karen Scott

25th Jason Ardoin

11:00 Scripture Readers:

4th Jack Vosburg

11th Combined Service/Jeff Bates

18th Dimple Lollis

25th Robert Platt

8:30 Service Ushers: Kim Dees, Jeffrey

Tolbert, Jason Ardoin, Jase Mathis

11:00 Service Ushers: Eddie Burgess,

Steve Tipton, Mark Maples, Mike Nyman

Money Counters:

JoAnn Weaver, Brenda Underwood

Doorstep Ministry:

Ronnie & Janice Miller

February Shoebox Ministry Needs:

Combs, hairbrushes, toothbrushes, stuffed animals (check after Valentine sales) As always, monetary gifts to the Shoebox Fund are very helpful. Thank you!!!



--Beth Smith

*****Souper Sunday Lunch*****

February 11 in CLC

After 10 AM Combined Service

Van Fundraiser . . . Donations Only

Variety of Soups: Eat in or Dine out

9:30 -10 AM CHAPEL FELLOWSHIP

Feb. 4 — Mitchel Dixon: Discovery I

Feb. 11 — Marilyn Bounds: Fellowship

Feb. 18 — Annie Hillman: Youth

Feb. 25 — Jeff Howell: Adult Class

Kids & Youth Wednesday

Snack Supper in February:

7 Jeff and Jennifer Mathis

14 All-Church Valentine Banquet

21 Lee and Linda Roberts

28 Ernest and Eileen Ward

Thanks for serving our Kids & Youth!



February 2024

Regular Sunday Schedule *(Nursery provided)* . . .

8:30 Contemporary Service

11:00 Traditional Service

8:30 Children's Church

5:00 Adult Choir Practice

9:50 Sunday School

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6:30 AM Prayer & Praise, Chapel 5 PM Water Board Meeting, Chapel	2 10 AM Adult Leisure Trip to Lighthouse Restaurant	3
4 8:30 Service:  Scout Sunday	5 12 Noon WSCS Luncheon, Chapel 6 PM Trustees Meeting, Chapel 6:30 - 8 PM Gideon's Meeting, Stinson House	6 9 AM - 11 AM Food Pantry 5:30 - 6:30 PM Scouts, Upstairs 6 - 7 PM Brownies, Cadets, CLC 6 PM Men's Bible Study, Chapel	7 5:30 Kids /Youth Snack Supper, CLC 6 PM Small Groups Bible Study for All Ages	8 6:30 AM Prayer & Praise, Chapel 6:30 PM Ultreya Meeting, Chapel	9 7 PM Jeff Bates Food Pantry Fund-raiser Concert, CLC	10
11 9 AM Sunday School Classes (optional) 10 AM Combined Service: Jeff Bates Concert Followed by Souper Bowl Lunch Van Fundraiser Donations Only	12	13 9 AM - 11 AM Food Pantry 5:30 - 6:30 PM Scouts, Upstairs 6 - 7 PM Brownies, Cadets, CLC 6 PM Men's Bible Study, Chapel	14 Happy Valentine's Day! *Ash Wednesday* 12 Noon and 5 PM Imposition of Ashes 1:30 PM Staff Meeting, Chapel 5:30 PM All-Church Valentine Banquet, CLC	15 6:30 AM Prayer & Praise, Chapel	16 Rose Morris and Violin Group, 3:00-5:15 PM Stinson House Pinewood Derby Setup, CLC	17 7 AM - 12 Noon Scouts Pinewood Derby, CLC
18 1st Sunday in Lent "A Jesus Shaped Life" Lent Series	19 Presidents' Day Church Office Closed	20 9 AM - 11 AM Food Pantry 5:30 - 6:30 PM Scouts, Upstairs 6 - 7 PM Brownies, Cadets, CLC 6 PM Men's Bible Study, Chapel	21 5:30 Kids /Youth Snack Supper, CLC 6 PM Small Groups Bible Study for All Ages	22 6:30 AM Prayer & Praise, Chapel	23	24
25 2nd Sunday in Lent <div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;">SENIOR SAINTS DINNER after 11 AM Service</div> Hosted by Chosen Kids Ministry, CLC	26	27 9 AM - 11 AM Food Pantry 9:30 AM Esther Kirkwood Circle, Room 103 5:30 - 6:30 PM Scouts, Upstairs 6 - 7 PM Brownies, Cadets, CLC 6 PM Men's Bible Study, Chapel	28 5:30 Kids /Youth Snack Supper, CLC All Church Skate 6 - 8 PM @ Uncle Joe's Skating Rink (6 PM Small Groups optional)	29 6:30 AM Prayer & Praise, Chapel		