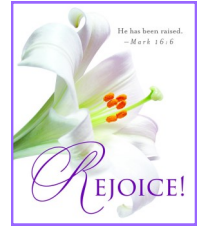




First Church of Lucedale

A Global Methodist Congregation

5101 Main Street ♦ P.O. Box 845 ♦ Lucedale, MS 39452
 (601) 947-8132 ♦ Email: Info@firstchurchoflucedale.com
 Website: www.firstchurchoflucedale.com



Notes From the Pastor's Desk . . . April, 2024

You will receive this newsletter the middle of Holy Week.

Rev. Jorge Acevedo is a recently retired pastor from Ft. Myers, Florida. I subscribe to periodic email reflections. Pastor Jorge writes about the most important week in history:

We are in Holy Week and applying “the law of proportionality” to the four Gospel narratives, we learn that the week we call “Holy Week,” from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, gets...now get this...32.5% of the biblical text! Below is the breakdown by each Gospel and the total:

- The Gospel according to Matthew, Matthew 21-28 (8 of 28) = 28.5%
 - The Gospel according to Mark, Mark 11-16 (6 of 16) = 37.5%
 - The Gospel according to Luke, Luke 19-24 (6 of 24) = 25%
 - The Gospel according to John, John 12-20 (9 of 21) = 42.8%
- 29 chapters of the 89 Gospel chapters = 32.5%

What does “the law of proportionality” teach us? Simply put, Holy Week matters! It matters a lot and not simply because Jesus rises from the dead at the end.

When I was a local church pastor, one of my frustrations was that the most important week in human history gets celebrated with most Christians missing the importance, of what I call, “the slow walk to Easter.” Let me explain. This week, many of my colleagues will work really hard to put together meaningful and transcendent Holy Week services, primarily for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Easter will be what we lovingly call “stupid full.” Lots of people will show and that’s good. But what so many will miss are the Worship Services that help Christ followers experience a thoughtful and meaningful stroll through the stories of the Upper Room, the agony of Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane, the pain of betrayal by Judas, the denial and abandonment by Peter and the other disciples, the brutalization of Jesus at His arrest, the mockery of His trumped up charges before Pilate as well as Jesus’ arduous walk to Calvary where He was hung and died between heaven and earth. They will miss out on the meaning and experience of the other days in Holy Week. 32.5% of the Gospels cover this week, not just Easter Sunday, and most of us miss on it. Holy Week matters; so this year, walk slowly to the cross my friends. Take each step with our Rabbi. Whether it’s in your corporate Worship Services or private times of worship, journey with Jesus slowly through the week that changed the world!

Dear Lord, your disciple Peter wanted to know who would betray you. You pointed to Judas but a little later also to him. Judas betrayed, Peter denied you. Judas hanged himself, Peter became the apostle whom you made the first among equals. Lord, give me faith, faith in your endless mercy, your boundless forgiveness, your unfathomable goodness. Let me not be tempted to think that my sins are too great to be forgiven, too abominable to be touched by your mercy. Let me never run away from you but return to you again and again, asking you to be my Lord, my Shepherd, my Stronghold, and my Refuge. Take me under your wing, O Lord, and let me know that you do not reject me as long as I keep asking you to forgive me. Perhaps my doubt in your forgiveness is a greater sin than the sins I consider too great to be forgiven. Perhaps I make myself too important, too great when I think that I cannot be embraced by you anymore. Lord, look at me, accept my prayer as you accepted Peter’s prayer, and let me not run away from you in the night as Judas did.

Bless me, Lord, in this Holy Week, and give me the grace to know your loving presence more intimately. Amen.

A prayer of Henri J.M. Nouwen

David Cell: (228) 216-6567 Email: pastor@firstchurchoflucedale.com

**New Schedule for
 April 7 – May 5:**
 9:00 AM Sunday School
 9:45 AM Chapel Fellowship
 10:00 AM Worship Service
 10:00 AM Children’s Church
 5:00 PM Choir Practice

Walt Stubblefield, Lay Leader ♦ 251-648-0973 ♦ walt4856@gmail.com

Children and Youth News . . .

Chrissy Jordan, Children's Pastor
251-377-5838
children@firstchurchoflucedale.com



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." (Matt. 5:14-16.) If we live the principles of the gospel,

we are the fulfillment of the Savior's pronouncement: "You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). Jesus came to shine God's light in this dark world THEN He proclaimed that we were to also shine that light. Hiding it under a bushel is . . . Do you remember standing in church as a child singing: "This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm going let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine. Let is shine." Do you remember doing the motions...hide it under a bushel with your hands over the make-believe light then emphatically saying NO!! waving with both hands. "I am going to let it shine!!!" Then making sure your mouth was puckered just right to blow out as much air as you could..."won't let Satan it blows it out. I am going to let it shine." I can hear those sweet childlike voices singing with such joy. "NO, I WON'T LET SATAN BLOW IT OUT." The beauty and innocence of children. Yet, as we grow and life happens our light gets a little dimmer each day. Suddenly the brilliance of an innocent child becomes tarnished by a sinful world. The light gets harder to shine. Jesus exclaims in Matthew 5 that we must shine our light so that God will be glorified. As life runs by us, we sometimes allow Satan to blow out our light. We sometimes let the darkness overtake our light. We also hide it letting no one see a difference in us. Sometimes we simply put out the light with our own selfish ways. We are the LIGHT OF THE WORLD - not an option with the Lord. Shining our light is a privilege. Letting Jesus pour through us is a blessing.

The month of April and May, "Chosen Kids" will be learning about shining our light. We will be learning all the wonderful ways that Jesus shone His light; then we will put that light into practice. Our children need to understand how important glorifying the Father is. When we shine for Him, lives can be changed. As adults, we must also check our brightness. Jesus came to save the WORLD! Jesus came to light the darkness. Jesus came to help us be the light. How bright is your light?

April 7: BIBLE DRILL COMPETITION
April 14: LADIES DAY
April 23: BIBLE DRILL COMPETITION

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

The youth have been putting in a lot of hard work in order to prepare for Snowbird, and I just wanted to say, thank you to everyone who helped out in our last fundraiser. I also want to send out a big thank you to everyone who donated so that the youth will get this amazing opportunity of going to Snowbird. If anyone would like to help sponsor the Snowbird trip or contribute a donation the youth would be very grateful.

The youth will be have two more fundraisers in May that we are looking forward to. I cannot wait to see more, hard work from the youth and have the continued support from the Church. If anyone would like to help sponsor the Snowbird trip or contribute a donation the youth would be very grateful.

Thank you again,
Annie Hillman

COMING SOON



VBS 2024

June 17-20

April Kids & Youth
Wednesday Snack Supper:

3rd Mike & Terri Nyman
10th Nancy Berry
17th Marla Howell / Mallorie Rogers
24th Ron & Annis Prescott

Announcements . . .

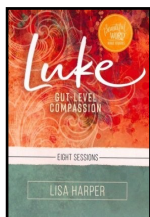
Luke

(Gut-Level Compassion)

by Lisa Harper

New Ladies Bible Study Beginning
Wed. - April 3, 6PM -- Room 103

Many of us believe that we aren't good enough to meet other people's expectations. Being missed and marginalized by others moves us to assume we're not quite good enough for God either. The great news woven throughout the Gospel according to Luke is that perfection is not a prerequisite for a deep and personal relationship with Jesus. During this eight-week study, we will discover that Jesus is especially fond of us that need a safe place to lean in and linger!



Ladies, if you are not already involved in a Wednesday night Bible Study, please join us! --**Terri Nyman**

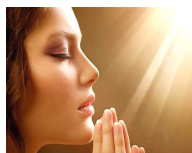
BROKEN TOGETHER

CALLING ALL LADIES OF ALL AGES:

We want to have all ladies join us as we come together to encourage one another.

We will have fun activities, sweet devotions, great food and a time to fellowship together - **Sunday, April 14, from 3:00 - 5:00 PM.** You can't miss this!

See **Pastor Chrissy or Terri Nyman** if you have questions. **Childcare provided: Nursery -12 years of age**



With over 30 volunteers showing up for the **Workday Event** and others providing service prior to the Event, it is impossible to mention everyone by name, but we do want to say "**Thank you very much**" to everyone who participated. Your efforts made our entire campus (inside and out) shine. Everyone who passed by could see that First Church of Lucedale is on the move. Our hope is to continue improving the physical beauty of our Church Campus with every member's prayers and help.

On behalf of the Trustees, **Thank you** once more!!! --**Danny Moore**

Music is such a special blessing from the Lord. It has the power to bring special memories to mind, set a mood for special occasions, to bring laughter or tears, and to even lift our praise and worship to God. I would hate to think of a world without music, wouldn't you?

One of the biggest challenges in combining our Worship Services will be the music. Of course, we all have our preferences for the type of music we like, especially in worship. I want you to know that the Music Team and I are going to work very hard at balancing the contemporary songs and the traditional hymns so that everyone will enjoy our worship time together. I would like to encourage everyone to prayerfully embrace the changes and open your hearts to learning some new songs of praise and thanksgiving to our Lord. The contemporary songs offer such beautiful lyrics that speak to our daily lives and are filled with scripture, praise, and love for Christ. The traditional hymns are filled with deep theology that serves as a powerful source of comfort, joy, praise and so much more. I think that having both in our Worship Service will be very beneficial to everyone, and I hope that you will all come to love and appreciate both.

Our church is very blessed to have so many talented and willing musicians to serve us. The Music Team has a financial need that we feel will make things better. We would like to purchase an electric drum set that would make it possible to control the volume of the drums. This purchase would make the quality and sound much more enjoyable for everyone. The drum set costs approximately \$8,000.00, and we are asking for donations.

Thank you for your generosity in giving toward our new hymnals, Our Great Redeemer's Praise. We now have 60 hymnals and we will continue to accept donations and hope to purchase 40 more. Let's move forward in "making a joyful noise to the Lord" in every song we sing!

**With Love,
Donna Bragg**

Memorials, Missions, Thank You!, Announcements . . .

In Loving Memory, gifts have been given. . .

In Memory of Kay Grafe

gifts have been given to First Church of Lucedale by Mary Sue Dudley, Esther Kirkwood Circle, Faye McNeill

In Memory of Dave Lollis

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

In Memory of Benny Breland, Dave Lollis, Buddy Varnadore

a gift have been given to First Church of Lucedale by Jessie and Brenda Underwood

In Memory of Betty Knight Stringer

gifts have been given to First Church of Lucedale by Mavis Dungan, JoAnn Weaver

In Memory of Jett Dorsett

a gift have been given to First Church of Lucedale by Mavis Dungan, Jim and Carol Clawson

In Memory of Charles "Chuck" Harbison

a gift have been given to First Church of Lucedale by Lee and Tonya Harbison

In Memory of Annie Mae Clark (*Chrissy Jordan's grandmother*)

a gift have been given to First Church of Lucedale by Marshall and Gail Havard

Our Christian Sympathies are extended to the Families of:

Betty Knight Stringer (*B.J. Knight's mother*) who passed away Sunday, February 25. The Funeral Service was held at Holmes Missionary Baptist Church. Burial was in Ball Cemetery. Please continue to remember B.J., Diana and their family in your prayers.

Charles "Chuck" R. Harbison (*Lee Harbison's brother*) passed away Tuesday, February 27 at Veteran's Home in Collins, Ms. The Funeral Service was Tuesday, March 5 at O'Bryant-O'Keefe Funeral Home, Pascagoula. Interment was at Biloxi National Cemetery. Please continue to be in prayer for Lee, Tonya and the rest of their family.



APRIL Shoebox Ministry Needs: dolls, jump ropes, stuffed animals (after Easter sales) and as always, monetary gifts to the Shoebox Fund are very helpful. Thank you!!! --Beth Smith



Food Pantry. . . We need toiletries: soap, shampoo, deodorant, shaving soap, razors, toothpaste and toothbrushes. Thank you!!!

--DeWanda Platt

Thanks for Serving in our April 7 thru May 5

Combined 10:00 AM Services:

Communion Servers:

Larry & Misty McDonald, Andy Brantley

Scripture Readers:

7th Jase Mathis
14th Ron Prescott
21st Teena Mitchell
28th Kelli Ardoin

Ushers: Roland Cochran, Joel Brown,
Derrick Scott, Jeff Howell

Money Counters:

Suzanne McKay, Betty Henderson

Doorstep Ministry: Ernest & Eileen Ward

9:45 - 10 AM CHAPEL FELLOWSHIP

April 7: Jeff Howell: Adult Class

April 14: Andy Brantley: Contemporary

April 21: Mitchel Dixon: Discovery I

April 28: Marilyn Bounds: Fellowship

April Kids & Youth Wednesday Snack Supper:

3rd Mike & Terri Nyman

10th Nancy Berry

17th Marla Howell / Mallorie Rogers

24th Ron & Annis Prescott

Brother David and First Church of Lucedale,
Thank you so much for your prayers for
my family! We are all doing much better.

--The Harbison Family

Announcing . . .

Caden Beverly great-grandson of Nancy Berry
Born March 14 -- 2lbs, 1 oz
Parents Carol Rogers and Drew Beverly

A special THANK YOU for all the prayers and
food we were given during the passing of my
mother, Betty Knight Stringer. We really ap-
preciated it. --B.J. Knight and Family

Thank you for all the cards, calls, visits, and
prayers in the time of the loss of Dave and
then my accident. God bless everyone who
has given in Memory of Dave - your thought-
fulness is so much appreciated!

Love, Dimple Lollis

Announcements . . .



“Understanding Our Times” Seminar

with OTM Representative Ken Mikle

What in the world is happening?
Are we stuck in this “new normal”?
Are things going to get better or worse?
Are you prepared for what may come next?
Is there more beneath the surface than we realize?



Ken Mikle

Mr. Mikle is a former detective and security consultant from Minneapolis, MN. As an OTM representative, he will present facts and evidence about what is happening in our world today and relate everything to what God says.

**Saturday, April 6
10 AM – 12 Noon
(light lunch)
First Church of Lucedale
5101 Main Street**

Announcements . . .



Christmas Child Shoebox Fundraiser

Mr. Jimmy's
FISH FRY



Menu:

Fish, French Fries, Baked Beans, Slaw and Dessert

Where:

First Church of Lucedale

5101 Main Street, Lucedale, MS

601-947-8132

When:

Sunday, April 21, 2024

11 AM to 12:30 PM

Cost:

Donations Only

Dine in OR Take out



Announcements . . .



FIRST CHURCH WITNESS T-SHIRT SALE

This is NOT a FUND RAISER but an opportunity for everyone to share the news of JESUS CHRIST.
 \$15.00 for all size shirts
 This will cover the cost of the shirt.
 March 17-April 4

Comfort Color Shirts....100% cotton Adult sizes are available in FOUR colors.
 Bright Salmon, Moss, Lagoon Blue, Pepper(dark gray) Adult sizes: small, medium, large, X large, 2XL, 3XL

Children's sizes are available in TWO colors.
 Lagoon Blue and Pepper (dark gray) Children's sizes: XS (4-5) S(6-8) M(10-12) L(14-16) XL (18-20)

Please return order form below with information and payment—cash or check payment to First Church of Luceda's

Name _____ Phone number _____

Size _____ Total number of shirts _____

Color _____ Total amount of money _____

Please return to church office

