



THE FLAME

The First United Methodist Church of LaGrange

CHURCH UPDATES

Meals on Wheels/Soup Kitchen

We are indeed better together! We are so grateful to our Meals on Wheels, Soup Kitchen, and Sack Lunch volunteers. The growth of Meals on Wheels through the COVID-19 outbreak has overwhelmingly shown us how needed these ministries are. Those being served in all three ministries continue to express their gratitude that we have not discontinued these services at a time when they need them most.

Community Care Fund

Rick Free continues to serve individuals on Tuesdays and Thursdays through Community Care, our church's program that provides free vouchers for medical prescriptions. Like our food ministries, it operates outside Wesley Hall's main doors.

Thursday Lunch Club (TLC)

Out of an abundance of caution, we have canceled TLC in June. TLC normally takes a month off in July, so we hope to be back in full swing in August!!

Online Sunday School

Our fearless Steve Cole continues to welcome everyone to online Sunday School held each week at 10:00 a.m. just before our online worship service at 11:00 a.m. To join, go to www.bitly.com/lagrangefumcsmallgroups. The passcode is 401.

Dial-A-Devotional

To hear a daily inspirational message from your pastors, dial (706) 756-5360.

Connect With Your Pastor

Our pastors want to be available to you! To connect with them, please fill out a short form at www.bitly.com/fumc_pastorconnect

SERMON FROM SUNDAY, MAY 31

'NO ONE SHOULD EVER STRUGGLE TO BREATHE'

by Dr. John Beyers, Senior Minister

For a thought on this Pentecost Sunday:
No one should ever struggle to breathe!

What was God's first gift to humanity? Our breath! Genesis 2:7 declares, "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

The ability to breathe freely is essential to life. But, I wonder, do we take it for granted?

Those with asthma do not.

Those with COPD do not.

To live a full life, we must be concerned about the *quantity* of our breath. But to live life to its full, we must be concerned about the *quality* of our breath.

Americans spend more than \$1 billion on oral health care, including toothpaste and mouthwash. We chew gum or suck on mints to ensure that we do not offend people with the smell of our breath.

But have we invested such care to ensure that we do not offend people with the substance of our breath — our words!

Our text for the morning, Acts 1:8, 2:1-4, speaks to the value of our witness through our words.

¹⁸"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

¹"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest

on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

The Holy Spirit, who is the Breath of Life, is God's gift to all living creatures. The Holy Spirit, who is the Lord and the Giver of Life, enables us to determine the quality of our breath, that is, the supernatural ability to breathe out words that give life: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23a).

It has only been three weeks since the world witnessed the murder of Ahmaud Arbery, a young black man in Brunswick, Georgia. And this week we have been shocked, stunned, and enraged again to watch the injustice done to a 46-year-old black man, George Floyd, handcuffed, lying face down to the pavement, with a knee on his neck, struggling to breathe — begging to breathe!

Is it any wonder that, after eight minutes of such unjust treatment — witnessed by silent bystanders — he breathed his last words and died?

How could any human being stand by, watch this atrocity take place, and not breathe out the words: STOP IT! STOP IT!

I don't know which is worse — the perpetrator of the act of torture or the silent bystanders who casually observed the atrocity!

In our day, there is undeniable value in dash cameras, body cameras, and cellphone video. This footage makes it impossible for us to deny the cruelty of "man's inhumanity towards man." (Robert Burns, "Man was made to mourn: A Dirge" 1784)

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MESSAGE

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Now hear me. Let us not become distracted by the destruction and looting of property committed by the outsiders, anarchists, agitators, and lawless opportunists all across our county and even in Atlanta, the Capital City of the South — the city we love to say is Too Busy to Hate.

Instead, let us stay focused on the root of the problem. Let us never forget what we saw take place in Brunswick, Georgia, and Minneapolis, Minnesota, over the past 30 days with our own eyes!

We saw the utter inhumanity of the human heart — watching people, police officers, silently standing by as another person is tortured to death.

And, tragically, we saw the utter humanity of suffering — hearing a 46-year-old man, handcuffed, lying face down to the pavement, with a knee on his neck, struggling to breathe, crying out for his mother, and speaking his last words: "I can't breathe."

No one should ever struggle to breathe!

I am privileged to possess a healthy quantity of breath. And, I try very hard to ensure the quality of my breath. But, am I equally concerned about the substance my breath conveys?

Acts 2:4 promises us that the evidence of the Holy Spirit present in the life of a believer is the gift of speaking in other tongues. The Greek word is *glossa*, meaning a language unknown to the believer but understood by others. The Holy Spirit can enable us to use our tongues in a new way to speak the language of love, mercy, and grace.

Every believer has been granted a quantity of the breath of life. But, ultimately, we will be known by the quality of our breath. Will we use it to *build* others up or to *beat* them up?

This begs the questions: How is your breathing, spiritually speaking? What is the quality of your breath as you breathe as you speak your words?

I appreciated the witness of our Methodist Bishop in Minnesota, Bishop Bruce Ough: "Now, it is our responsibility as persons of faith, and particularly as followers of Jesus in the Methodist tradition, to address this pervasive pandemic of racism. We are compelled to address this pandemic with the same intensity and intentionality with which we are addressing COVID-19."

I also appreciated the opinion piece published in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution written by The City of LaGrange Police Chief Lou Dekmar: "Flawed culture, not police training, led to Floyd's death."

May I add that culture is determined by those who make up the culture. Thus, the root of the problem is inside my Heart and made evident through the thoughts spoken from my Head and the deeds done by my Hands.

We need to learn a new language, a new vocabulary, a new way of speaking — a new tongue empowered by the Holy Spirit!

Please hear me clearly and carefully. People who looked like me created unjust and oppressive systems. Therefore, people who look like me must work to dismantle those systems.

Some will not hear me, but the lack of hearing will not stop me speaking!

Some will not understand me — the closed-minded, hard-hearted, committed racists — but the lack of understanding will not stop me from speaking.

Some will not hear or understand you. Speak anyway until others join you when you say:

I will no longer be a silent observer of cruelty!

No one should ever struggle to breathe!

Say this with me:

I will no longer be a silent observer of cruelty!

No one should ever struggle to breathe!

Please hear me breathing out pleas for justice for those who are marginalized. I am breathing out pleas for equality for those who face daily discrimination. And I am breathing out pleas for healing for those who are wounded.

And, please join me in supporting the Racial Trustbuilding Initiative in Troup County and Circles of Troup County. Both of these community-based missions are worthy of our continued support.

None of us can do this alone.

Only through faith in the healing grace of Jesus Christ and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit can we be healed of the inner insecurity and the demeaning sense of low self-esteem that is at the root of all discrimination and cruelty.

And right now, right where you are, you can receive His healing grace and become His witness of change! Will you invite Him? Say with me, "Come, Holy Spirit!"

Let us pray:

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine,
till all this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.

— *Breathe on Me, Breath of God*
Edwin Hatch

Remember how much I love you ...
It's an honor to serve as your Senior Minister!

Dr. John Beyers

Worship by

GIVING

'heartbeats
of love in
negotiable form.'



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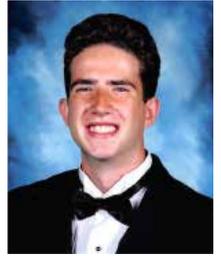


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you can designate your offering either
for the Operating Budget or for Missions!
bit.ly/lagrange_fumc_giving

Our church family definitely has been showing God's love to our community even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic! Meals on Wheels volunteers (like Bob Smith in the top photo) are adhering to strict health and safety guidelines by preparing and delivering food to those who are homebound. In the middle photo, Dr. John Beyers and Pastor Ben Wills are shown delivering a hearty spread of food (prepared by one of our own, Joyce Sato of 505 Eats), to the Laboratory Services team at WellStar West Georgia Medical Center. (Also shown is church member Linda Lloyd, who is a supervisor in the Lab!) In addition, as shown in the bottom photo, members of our church family volunteering distributing food to our community through the Feeding the Valley's drive-thru mobile food bank.



Miller Penn honored with Richard Linch Scholarship



Miller Penn

Please join us in congratulating Miller Penn, who has been honored with the 2020 Richard Linch Memorial Scholarship.

We are so grateful to Carole and Kelly Linch for honoring their son's memory by investing in the life of an outstanding high-school senior each year with a \$1,500 scholarship. The scholarship is made possible through The First United Methodist Church of LaGrange Memorial Foundation.

Carole and Kelly's son Richard was an active member of our church from 1972 to 1986 and rarely missed any children's or youth activities. In the summers, he participated in Vacation Bible School, MYF retreats, and mission trips.

Even though Richard's life was tragically cut short, he was always full of life. He carried a smile on his face and was just as active in the LaGrange community as he was with his church.

We think Richard would heartily approve of Miller's receiving his namesake scholarship, for Miller has the same spirit of joy and service that Richard exemplified. Just as we did with Richard, we have watched Miller grow up in our children's and youth ministries. He also has helped lead our Blessings in a Book Bag program. Miller is the son of Megan and Tripp Penn and the younger brother of Riley and Hannah. He is heading to Athens in the fall to study biology and pre-dentistry at the University of Georgia.

Congratulations, Miller! Your church family is proud for you to receive this meaningful award and carry on Richard's legacy.



Attention, Lovebirds!

We are compiling a list of our church couples who have been married at least 50 years.

If you have been married to your honey since 1970 or before, please let us know!



Please send an email to natalie@lagrangefumc.org or leave a message at the Church Office at (706) 884-4635.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT KIDS

SUMMER DRIVE-THRU CELEBRATION

BROAD STREET ENTRANCE OF THE CHILDREN'S BUILDING

JUNE 3 4-6 PM

KIDS: DRIVE THRU WITH YOUR PARENTS TO PICK UP YOUR SUMMER BUCKET FILLED WITH FUN AND FAITH-BUILDING ACTIVITIES, PRIZES, AND TREATS. WE'LL HAVE PICTURES OF OUR DRIVE-THRU IN OUR JULY ISSUE OF THE FLAME!

CONGRATS, CLASS OF 2020!



Caroline Beall



Morgan Bennett



Sam Bradfield



Cole Cox



Lizzie Doerr



Donta Dunson



Will Flowers



Cameron Jones



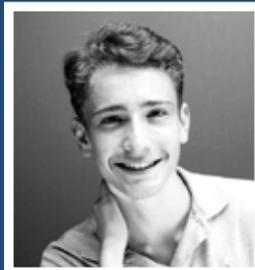
Kelsey Knight



Walt Lanier



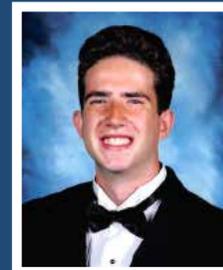
Logan Lopez



Alex Martin



Abby Mazzolini



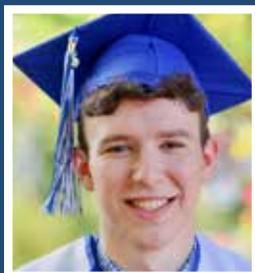
Miller Penn



Griffin Sanchez



Hana Sato



Ethan Sims



Laegan Smith



Trent Smith



Emma Strickland

**WE LOVE YOU AND
ARE SO PROUD OF YOU!**

*"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." - Jeremiah 29:11*



Anna Shank



Valerie Tures



Abby Womble

A SECOND HELPING OF *Rick's* RECIPES



You've followed his video series on Facebook; now you can receive a published copy of more of his most sought-after recipes! Ladies and gentlemen, we hope you enjoy this second helping of recipes from the kitchen of Rick Free, our Director of Food Services.

CHICKEN SALAD

3 lbs. of chopped or pulled chicken
4 boiled eggs
1 cup chopped celery
1 ½ cups of mayonnaise
¾ cup of sweet pickles
3 ½ oz. pimentos (drained)

Combine all ingredients. Refrigerate when done.

OREO DELIGHT

1 package of Oreos
1 stick of butter
1 6 oz. box of instant pudding (vanilla or chocolate, prepared)
1 8 oz. container of whipped topping

Crush Oreos; reserve ¼ cup of the crumbs. Mix the remaining crumbs with the melted butter, press mixture into bottom of 9"x13" dish, and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Spread prepared pudding over Oreo crust. Top with whipped topping and rest of Oreo crumbs. Refrigerate for at least an hour.

OVEN FRIED CHICKEN

2 cups of self-rising flour
¾ cup of powdered milk
¾ cup of paprika
boneless chicken breasts
salt and pepper
melted butter or butter spray

Trim chicken, season with salt and pepper, and refrigerate overnight. Mix together first three ingredients. Cover each piece of chicken with dry mix; shake off excess.

Line pan with aluminum foil (or parchment paper) and spray with cooking spray. Place each piece on pan. Brush top of each piece with melted butter or a generous coating of buttered flavored spray. Bake at 325° for 45 minutes or an hour, until juice runs clear.

HASHBROWN CASSEROLE

2 lbs. of frozen hashbrowns (1 bag)
1 cup of melted butter (divided)
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 pint sour cream
2 cups of cheese
2 cups of crushed cornflakes
Salt and pepper

Thaw hashbrowns. Mix soup, ½ cup of butter, sour cream, and salt and pepper. Pour mixture over hashbrowns and mix well, Pour into 9"x13" pan. Spread cheese over mixture. Mix cornflakes and ½ cup butter, sprinkle over casserole. Bake at 350° for 30-40 minutes.

EASY LEMON PIE

1 box instant lemon pudding, prepared
1 can frozen lemonade (thawed)
1 can sweetened condensed milk
16 oz. whipped topping

Whisk together the lemon pudding, lemonade, sweetened condensed milk, and half of the whipped topping. Set aside.

Line bottom of pan with a layer of graham crackers. Top with ⅓ of the lemon filling. Place another layer of graham crackers on top of the filling. Spread another ⅓ of the filling over the crackers.

Repeat with one more layer of graham crackers followed by another ⅓ of the filling. Spread 8 oz. of whipped topping on top of the dessert. Refrigerate an hour before serving.

SPINACH AND WATERMELON SALAD

1 lb. fresh spinach
2 cups grape tomatoes (sliced in half)
2 cups watermelon (bite-sized)
1 pkg. feta cheese
1 ½ bottles of olive oil vinaigrette

Mix together.

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THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of LAGRANGE

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- Mr. Rick Free (ext 210).....Director of Food Services
- Mr. Eddie Giddens.....Custodian
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To reach all other staff members and/or volunteers,
please call the Church Office.

We always look forward to hearing from you.

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Memorial Gifts



JANET FRANKLIN

Lea and J.M. Rawlinson

WILLIAM D. FRANKLIN

(BROTHER OF
LORETTA BEALL)

Lea and J.M. Rawlinson

QUILLIAN BALDWIN

Mary Anne and H.R. Shepherd
Linda and Jim Daniel
Tee Borders
Mary and Jim Howard

JACKIE HUCKSTEP

Mary Anne and H.R. Shepherd
Linda and Jim Daniel

JOHN MCMANAWAY

Pat and Orren Gilbert
Oleeta Aspinwall
Carol and Jim Morgan
Florene Lawrence
Carolyn Alise
Bobbie and Lonnie Ritchie
Carlene and Dusty Mills
Anne Allen
Ann and Perry Wilder
Betty and Bob Ward
Jane Stephens
Virginia Robertson
Mr. and Mrs. James Nappier
Sarah Funderburk
Marilyn and Allen Smith
Michael Shinn
Nancy Blanton
Oliver McGowan

Clothing Center

The Clothing Center closed early this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to remain closed during June and July. (It normally closes for these two months each year.) However, it will continue to remain open for EMERGENCIES ONLY, as it has made available on a case-by-case basis since its early closure and has served at least four families during that time. The Clothing Center is not accepting donations currently due to the unknown risks of transmission on clothing materials.

The emergency procedures have worked very well, as cases are vetted by Wanda Kinnaman (the Clothing Center's director) or through a referring partner. Barbara Ward and another volunteer then fills the order, labels a bag with the recipient's name affixed, and places it outside the door for an individual to pick up at a prearranged time. This has allowed them to help others in our community without placing anyone in potential danger.

The Clothing Center is planning to open for its 69th season on August 4 provided it is deemed safe to do so. In the meantime, if you know of someone who needs a referral, Wanda can be reached at clothingcenterdirector@gmail.com or (706) 594-4864.