

Dear Church family,

Then you shall declare before the Lord your God: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous. Dueteronomy 26:5

God asks his people remember, every time they worship, the story of their roots. Their ancestors were slaves in Egypt. Whenever harvest comes, these children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren take an offering to God. As they lift it up, they remember their history. They remember that they don't have a highbred spiritual pedigree. Their ancestors were wanderers, nomads, people without homes who followed God into the unknown. They faced challenges, and when they cried to God, God heard. God answered. Every time they worship, the people remember their history. That God cares for them not just when they're at the center of the map, but on the ragged edges.

The stories we choose to remember about *our* history, about how God is moving in it, are vital. These are the stories we tell our children. The histories that give us strength and hope when times are hard. The way we celebrate when the harvest comes in.

What's our story? Start to discover it by spending time this week thinking about *your* story. What God has done in your life? What cry did you lift that God answered? What hardships has God brought you through, what miracle have you seen? Then take the circle a little broader- what God has done in *this church*?

One story that resonates with me from our FUMC history is that just before the Great Depression, FUMC built a new building. They had capital debt at one of the worst economic times in our nation's history. And yet, God helped them, in the *Great Depression* to not only keep thriving in ministry, but also to pay off that debt in its entirety. I look at their creativity (the group that paid the least each week had to care for a duck-Gwendolyn, the boy scouts cleared a cotton field...) and sacrifice and know that we, with a new building just before COVID, have ancestors cheering us on.

The stories we tell become part of worship. The stories of God's work in our lives and in this church give meaning to our offerings today. We remember that it's God who is calling us, God who guides, God who makes a way. We remember and lift up our first fruits to God with joy as we tell that story.

Speaking of joy...

- WOW Zooms are on every Wednesday afternoon!!! It is a joy to learn about Jesus with this awesome bunch of kiddos!
- Fun time with our C.A.M.P. University friends . They loved the Chia Pet activity the Inside Outreach kids prepared for them!

- Week of the Young Child- April 2021 at FUMC Day School we love to Play, Learn and Grow
- Marie Krana and Thomas Curtiss got married on Thursday! Both are new members. Although both were married before and lost spouses, Marie shared this ceremony was different because it was religious. CONGRATULATIONS to the both of them!
- Our Youth Picnic Talks are getting a new name! Youth Pizza Talks are taking place each Wednesday from 6:30-7:30pm in the South Building Foyer! Join us for an evening meal and good discussion! See you there!
- It is a joy to reach out to college students with boxes filled with love and delicious snacks! The Woven Women Ministry sponsored the assembly and mailing of 42 care packages sent as far away as Maine and as close as just down the street. Thank you, church family, for your part in showing these kids some TLC!
- People are watching! Our communications and multimedia is hard at work to make this possible for all, *para todos*.

We're moving forward with our gradual re-opening

- Children's Church is now at 9:30 and 11am for kids 3 years and up following the children's sermon. Each hour is different, so kids with parents who are here for Sunday School and worship will have new learning throughout.
- Do you like to sing? We'd love to have duets, quartets, even quintets in worship. If you and your friends are ready to put something together, it would bless us! Contact Pastor Jon jherrin@mcfirst.com if you'd like to sing!
- Our nursery is set to re-open (birth-2 years old) on a reservation basis starting in May! Stay tuned for more details.
- Pastor Jon is reaching out to Sunday School classes with 12 and fewer folks to see which ones are interested in in-person meetings on campus. Health and safety guidelines will continue to be in effect and we've got special instructions on how to clean your rooms when you're finished so they're ready for the next group.
- We've begun to plan summer programs including Day School camps, music and children camps and even VBS. Let's pray that things continue as well as they have been so that we can continue to bring all these online ministries back to in-person as well!

Pastor Laura