



LATHAM
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Branch

August 2016
Vol. 4 Issue 7

Connecting Generations to Grow Relationships with God, Others, and Creation

Stewardship Campaign

Marty Martin, Chairman Finance Committee

The Finance Committee has initiated the 2017 Stewardship Campaign. I know you have all experienced many Stewardship Campaigns but have you ever considered what stewardship means? There are many definitions of stewardship but they all center around the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. In our case we are all stewards of Latham United Methodist Church and we have been entrusted with the care and growth of the church and its ministries. As members of Latham, we pledge to support the church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness. So, as we enter this season of stewardship, I ask that you reflect on how you can fulfill your role as a steward of Latham.

What you can do. Here are some things you can do to be a good steward and live up to your pledge to support Latham:

Share your prayers. Prayer brings us close to God and through that relationship we are able to increasingly reflect God's love in our lives.

Share your presence. Your presence for worship, study, and fellowship are central to your spiritual growth and the growth of our church.

Share your service of talent and time. Everyone has special God-given talents. Real ministry takes place when a person uses their special gifts to meet a need. At Latham, you can find a place to share no matter your level of skill, time availability or spiritual development.

Share your witness. As United Methodists and members of the body of Christ, we are all called to extend God's love to others and share our faith. Strive to show God's love for all his children and let your daily actions reflect your faith in a loving God.

Share your gifts. Tithes and pledges are spiritual disciplines that help us put God first in our lives. Everything we have is a gift from God and throughout scripture, we are reminded of the importance of giving back a portion of what God has so generously provided.

Needs of the church. As a church family, Latham has many of the same needs as your personal family. We have to pay utilities, insurance, repairs, and the like on our church facility. We also have to pay our pastors and staff and as United Methodists we must pay our share of Conference and District apportionments. But, in addition to these basic costs of running a household, we support many ministries to do God's work in the community and the world. To responsibly plan and manage support of the church and its ministries that God has entrusted to us, we develop an annual budget to reflect the financial needs of the church. We then conduct a Stewardship Campaign to provide an opportunity for our members to share their gifts from God in terms of tithes and pledges to do the work of the Lord.

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Music Ministry

Sam Cox, Minister of Music

Fall is upon us! As summer comes to a conclusion, we are already hard at work planning for the upcoming program year.

Wesley Singers will resume their rehearsals on Wednesday, August 3, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 151. We traditionally sing on (or near!) the third Sunday of each month. Our repertoire includes southern Gospel favorites, hymns from the Cokesbury hymnal, and even requests from the floor at times.

Chancel Choir is taking the month of August off, but will return to its regular rehearsal schedule on Wednesday, August 31, at 7:00 p.m. in the choir room. We sing at the 11:00 service and try to offer up a broad musical variety, in keeping with the diverse outreach we strive to accomplish.

Jubilation Ringers, our adult handbell group, will begin fall rehearsals on Wednesday, September 7, at 6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary balcony. We try to play monthly in the 11:00 service.

Christmas is right around the corner! That seems insane to say on these 100-degree days, but for church musicians it's absolutely true. It won't be too long before we will begin working on our Christmas season programs. Wesley Singers will provide the program for the Elderberries December meeting, and the Chancel Choir will offer a cantata at the 11:00 service on December 18. If you've ever wanted to sing with either of these groups but weren't able to make a long-term commitment, this is the perfect opportunity to take us for a test drive and in so doing contribute to the holiday spirit.

Stewardship, Continued from page one

Key milestones for the Stewardship Campaign. Here are the key milestones for our 2017 Stewardship Campaign.

- 24 August – Budget requests due to Business Manager
- 13 Sept – Finance Committee develops draft 2017 Operating Budget
- 16 October – Pledge Cards picked up/mailed
- 6 November – Pledge Sunday (pledge cards turned in)
- 15 Nov – Finance Committee prepares final 2017 Operating Budget
- TBD Dec – 2017 Budget submitted to Board of Stewards for approval

Make a pledge. After the Finance Committee receives the askings from the church committees and ministry teams, we will share with you the church's needs and what each committee and ministry team plans to use their funds to accomplish. When you receive your pledge card on or about Sunday, 16 October 2016, please prayerfully consider all that God has provided and make a generous tithe or pledge to the Latham 2017 annual budget. **Be a good steward!**

Recycle Christian Literature

The United Methodist Women have an ongoing project to collect extra and used Christian literature to donate to Edwin Hodges Ministries based in Decatur. This ministry ships Christian literature to churches in need, not only in the U.S., but all over the world. What we casually throw in the trash or recycle bin is a treasure to those who often tear books apart to share in their study of God's word. Sometimes this is the only way churches can establish church libraries. There are two baskets at Latham to collect the literature. One is in the Welcome Center, and one is in the hall of the office wing. Items that are accepted are Bibles; devotional booklets (Upper Rooms, etc.); concordances and reference books; VBS literature, pictures and kits; and Christian novels, pamphlets and tracts. Hymnals, sheet music, cassettes and CDs are also accepted. Please help us be good stewards in recycling and in becoming a successful outreach ministry to our fellow Christians around the world. If you have questions, call Judy Moore, 256-881-9570.



Lectionary Scriptures for August 2016

The Lectionary Cycle is a three year cycle that includes readings from the Old and New Testaments and The Book of Psalms. In following the Lectionary over the three year period over 80% of the Bible will be read. This process can be a systematic method of consistent Bible study as we reflect on the power of Scripture in our day to day living.

August 7, 2016

Isaiah 1: 1, 10-20: These verses come from the first set of writings from the prophet. Verses 10-20 speak of God's impatience with Israel's religious behavior in which the sacrifices are meticulously provided, but the spirit of the people is far from God.

Hebrews 11: 1-3, 8-16: This section of Hebrews remembers the faith of the ancestors: the faith of Abraham and Sarah (evidence of things hoped for.) These things were seen by the writers as righteousness.

Luke 12:32-40: This reading prepares the community to be prepared for the Parousia (the coming of Christ): to be alert and to lay up treasures in heaven. The reading continues with the theme of the unexpected arrival of the master that will reveal which people are faithful and which people are faithless.

Psalm 50: 1-8, 22-23

August 14, 2016

Isaiah 5:1-7: These verses are the allegory of "The Song of the Vineyard" in which the writer tells of God's love and care for Israel and God's despair over Israel's unfaithfulness.

Hebrews 11: 29-12:2: The writer continues the story of our faith history and those people of faith who have suffered in the confidence that God would fulfill God's promises to the people. The reading concludes with the verses inviting us to know that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses and to live fully into our own discipleship.

Luke 12: 49-56: In this particular text Jesus is preaching fire and the sword and redefining "peace" for those who may think that it means simply freedom from conflict. He speaks of his own baptism and the tension that exists until it is accomplished. The longer passage goes on to warn people to be aware of the signs of spiritual crisis that surround them on every side.

Psalm 80: 1-2, 8-19

August 21, 2016

Jeremiah 1: 4-10: This passage is the call of Jeremiah and his commission to speak God's word to the people.

Hebrews 12: 18-29: This text contrast the two covenants and warns the people not to refuse the one who speaks to them from heaven. It speaks a word of hope and promise and invites gratitude and awe from those who hear it.

Luke 13: 10-17: This is the story of Jesus healing (on the Sabbath) the woman handicapped for 18 years. It includes a confrontation between Jesus and the authorities over such healing, which can be argued is a responsibility of the Jews.

Psalm 71: 1-6

August 28, 2016

Jeremiah 2: 4-13: God's faithfulness to the people is eternal in spite of their rebellious acts. Through the prophet God expresses love and distress that the people have chosen to forsake the one who is a spring of living water, and to replace God with "empty cisterns" (idols and greed).

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16: The first part of the scripture speaks to the aspects of love (hospitality, comfort, marriage, generosity). It urges the reader to imitate those who have committed themselves to the Christ who is the same eternally. The closing verses include the sacrifice of good works.

Luke 14:1, 7-14: Jesus, dining in the home of one of the rich and powerful, tells a parable about humility and generosity. He invites the guests at the dinner to experience the "lowliness" of the poor to extend their hospitality not only to those who can repay them, but to those who are in need.

Psalm 81: 1, 10-16

Latham United Methodist Church

109 Weatherly Road
Huntsville, AL 35803

Phone: 256-881-4069

Fax: 256-880-0305

On the web: lathamumc.org



Connect with the Staff

Rev. Mike Ratliff, Senior Pastor	mikeratliff@lathamumc.org
Matt Jones, Associate Pastor	mattjones@lathamumc.org
Sam Cox, Minister of Music	samcox@lathamumc.org
Susan Terry, Minister of Connect & Children's Ministries	susanterry@lathamumc.org
Adam Miller, Minister of Youth	adammler@lathamumc.org
Jim Geisinger, Associate Music Director	jim.geisinger@yahoo.com
Marvene Bomtrager, Staff Coordinator for Inreach	office@lathamumc.org
Anita Banks, Business Administrator	admin@lathamumc.org
Traci Harris, Director of Child Development Center	lumcdc@lathamumc.org
Cherry Keeton, Organist	
Eleanor Hollobaugh, Pianist	

Child Development Center

Traci Harris, Director

Summertime as we know it at LUMCDC is coming to a close. Our 6 week "Camp Courage" was a great success with 36 in attendance. We have all certainly enjoyed cooling off during Water Play Day each week.

August 1st brings a new school year and we are really excited! Teachers have been very busy making preparations, organizing classrooms, creating meaningful lessons and hands on learning activities. We will kick off the new school year with 52 students to love and teach. We have 34 full day students and 18 half day students. Many of our students are returning and we look forward to welcoming new friends and families to our school. We are very blessed to have all of our classes FULL with the exception of our Half Day Two Year Olds. If you know of a cute 2 year old needing a place to hang out in the mornings, send them our way!

ENJOY THE CITY coupon books will be available the week of August 15th.

It is our main fundraiser of the year. This year the cost is \$25 each and they've improved the access to savings with an app you can utilize on your phone. How handy is that for those of us who would rather not carry around a bulky book! If you are interested in looking at or purchasing a coupon book, please stop by the CDC office by August 26th.

We appreciate your support!

We continue to keep the children safe during school hours with our secured access door. We appreciate church members being patient and understanding of the necessity, especially when it comes to keeping our sweet children safe in this crazy world we live in. Happy August All!