

Pastor's Update, Wednesday, June 3, 2020

Happy Wednesday to you, Wilmore FMC. Here are a few things you may want to know today:

The Latest Edition of the Light and Life Magazine our denominational magazine, [can be found via digital flip-book, by clicking here.](#) This month's theme is racial unity – a timely topic.

In-Person Worship on June 14 If you intend to be present, please don't forget to either call or e-mail the office and let us know you're coming – for planning / space reasons. Also, you can find a Quick Facts Version and a Fully Explained Version of our plans [by clicking here.](#)

Further Phase One Reopening Details: As I've mentioned before, the guidelines that have been produced for in-person gatherings are somewhat confusing, especially for churches, and particularly with regard to group meetings, youth meetings and child care ministries. When you combine that with the amount of space needed to accommodate the social distancing and then time factors, the whole thing becomes a bit of a quagmire. Nevertheless, we are navigating these with the help of ABF leaders and plan to re-start in-person ABFs sooner rather than later. Stay tuned.

World-wide Online VBS: Families- if you are missing VBS, then be sure to mark your calendars for this world-wide VBS. There will be puppeteers, magicians and storytellers presenting the Gospel to kids all over the world! We have registered our church and more details will follow in the weeks ahead, but mark the dates of June 22-25 or June 29-July 2. [Click here for the website and description.](#)

Church Staff Changes On Monday, June 15, Roy and Lucia Grammel will retire from their positions as Facilities Coordinator and Custodian, respectively. They have served our church well these last five years, and have been especially efficient and helpful through our construction process, keeping a building under construction as organized and clean as humanly possible. We are glad they intend to remain as part of our church family, continuing to serve in many ways in ministry. As you are inclined, I'm sure they'd appreciate a word of thanks from all who have been touched by their service among us.

Also on the 15th, we are pleased to welcome to the church staff Doug and Sue Adkins, who will assume the Facilities Coordinator and Custodian positions. You know them, as they are already members of our church family, but we look forward to their service and ministry in these ways in the days to come. Welcome Doug and Sue!

An Interesting, Historical Article, *Astronauts, Riots, and Pandemics: 2020 vs. 1969*, about the days in which we live can be found below.

A Note on Giving – Our faithful giving continues, proving that giving, to this congregation, is truly an intentional act of worship which has nothing to do with convenience or consumerism. The church is doing fine, financially – all our bills and ministry commitments are cared for.

Wilmore Independence Day Parade As of now, the parade is still a "go" and we are hoping to include the Wilmore Lawnmower Brigade...and to do so, we need the help of all "men with mowers!" All you need is: 1) a good sense of humor, 2) a little coordination and, 3) a push lawnmower (and the last two "needs" are optional...we can loan a mower.)

There are only two rehearsals: Thursday and Friday, July 2 and 3, 8:00-9:00 p.m. at Kinlaw Park (Kinlaw Drive in Talbott) It would help if you could make both of these. The parade is on Saturday, July 4th at 10:00 a.m. If you'd care to join the Brigade, please [click on this link](#) and answer a few quick questions...and pass the invitation along to friends who may be interested.

Pastor Andrea's Youth Newsletter is now available. [Click here to download your copy.](#)

Teamwork – accomplishing something together that we can't do on our own. It seems to me that this is really one thing that the Church ought to be known for. Want a great example of working together as a team? [Check this out.](#)

Some Thoughts on Race Relations Just before Christmas, the eastern area Free Methodist conference superintendents and spouses met in Charleston, SC for a few days to plan and, frankly, get to know each other and our new Bishop, Keith Cowart. Included in time was a meeting with the leaders of the Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church – that is the church where nine parishoners were killed back in 2015 while they attended a Bible study.

Our (all-white) leadership team spent over 2 ½ hours with the AME church historians in open, honest conversation. They had never heard of the Free Methodist denomination and were very pleased to hear of our existence and historic stand against slavery and every other form of oppression and diminishing of human life, regardless of skin color.

When the question was asked, “How might you suggest that the typical church improve race relations?” this is the answer they gave: “Treat people of color the same as you treat other white people...on a personal level.”

This group of African-American Christian brothers and sisters, who suffered an enormous attack of racial hatred, were quick to communicate that they don't want or need the help or pity of white people. They don't want to be “felt sorry for.” They don't want to be anyone's “project.” They simply want to be treated, personally, as equals...as friends and people, which means, initiate conversation with them the same as you would with persons of our own skin color, presume the best of them, invite them into our world, our neighborhoods, our circle of friends, and our churches.

To them, it was all quite simple, and they felt that, nearly always, our efforts would be well received and reciprocated, if not immediately, eventually. But it was made clear that the initiative really needed to come from us. Due to the past and present racial tensions in our nation, those who at least seem to hold the power and the majority have to make the move if we're to get anywhere with reconciliation.

What does that mean for you and me when we're at the store? At a restaurant? On the sidewalk?

Like so many things in life, the path for large-scale transformation begins with person to person relationships. But that takes intentionality on all of our parts. Jesus said, *“By this all people will know that you are my disciples – if you love one another.”* (John 13:35) The expression of love requires intentionality.

May the Lord find us all, regardless of the color of our skin, to be people who take that initiative to open doors, cross barriers and love – becoming the peacemakers God designed His people to be.

Blessings to you all!

Pastor Daryl

Astronauts, Riots, and Pandemics: 2020 vs. 1969

June 3, 2020 Paul G. Kengor

In July 1969, three American astronauts landed on the moon. It wasn't just a great technical triumph. It was a much-needed respite amid social and political chaos.

America was already beset by Vietnam and civil rights struggles. That summer of 1969, things got worse. The nation was shocked by news of a riot after a confrontation between gay rights activists and police outside the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village on June 28. Then came news of the drowning of Mary Jo Kopechne in a fatal vehicle accident by an intoxicated Senator Ted Kennedy in Chappaquiddick, Massachusetts late-night July 18-19. August brought word of the hideous Manson "Family" murders of pregnant actress Sharon Tate and others in a brutal attack the night of August 9-10. A week later came the spectacle of Woodstock, where a half million gathered in rural New York in an unprecedented display of rock n' roll, drugs, and hedonism.

And still more was stirring beneath gathering storm clouds. The National Convention for Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) opened on June 18, 1969 at the Chicago Coliseum on South Wabash, just down the street from police headquarters, home of the so-called "pigs" with whom the radical Weathermen prepared for battle. A mighty clash ultimately erupted in October in what became known as the Days of Rage. The organized riot commenced on October 5, 1969 when the "flower children" dynamited the statue commemorating Chicago police killed in the 1886 Haymarket Riot. As far as the protesters were concerned, these men were not Chicago's finest, but jackbooted swine. Cops were bad. Violent clashes with over 1,000 policemen ensued. Americans watched on their televisions in horror.

Adding fuel to the fire, not only was there social and political chaos in 1969, but even a pandemic afoot. A malicious virus emanated from Asia. Known as the Hong Kong Flu, technically called "H3N2," it killed several million worldwide, including over 100,000 in America—a death toll chillingly similar to COVID-19. It was brutal on the respiratory system.

And thus, amid the turmoil, the moon landing on July 20 by the Apollo 11 crew of Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins was a wonderful respite. The whole of humanity watched with admiration and appreciation.

All of which seems very appropriate and very ironic context given current events. Once again, America has boldly gone forth with another historic space mission. In Florida, SpaceX lifted into orbit, heralding a new era. Here was a private company sending astronauts into orbit, almost a decade after the shelving of the space shuttle program.

Appropriately, the two astronauts shot off from the same Florida launchpad that had served the Apollo missions. This time, however, resurrecting the program was not the broke federal government but a private company called SpaceX, founded by billionaire Elon Musk. The impressive partnership between NASA and the private company breaks new ground in many ways. President Trump, who rightly called the feat "an inspiration for our country," noted that the launch "makes clear the commercial space industry is the future." Sights are literally now set on Mars.

Of course, this launch in 2020, like that in 1969, likewise occurs during a time of social-political chaos and pandemic, with cities smoldering in protest over the police killing of George Floyd, with demonstrators masking up as COVID-19 continues its morbid march. The disease has robbed the lives over 100,000 in America alone.

With such bad news, the SpaceX launch should have been a welcomed respite. And yet, unlike July 1969, this seems to have elicited comparatively little coverage. Sure, this launch wasn't as historic as July 1969. Apollo 11 is hard to surpass. What's striking, however, is how little attention SpaceX seemed to receive. You could've easily missed it.

This launch is likewise historic, particularly the horizons that can literally open up. Nonetheless, those hopes and dreams were overshadowed by the Floyd protests and by COVID-19. That's too bad. This should've been a moment of unity during a time of crisis. Today, it seems, all news is political news, or bad news. Well, here was some good news for a change.

The SpaceX launch says something promising about human achievement amid trial, about our humanity rising above our sinfulness. And yet, have we paused to recognize that? I think not. And that, too, seems a sign of our sinfulness.

The world is on fire in 2020. It was in 1969 as well. It's easy to focus on the negative. And we should rightly call out injustice. But we should also pause to reflect on what is good.