



Love in Action

The Newsletter of Maggie Valley United Methodist Church

Volume 16, Issue 5

May, 2023

FROM PASTOR COLE...

Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look! I'm making all things new."

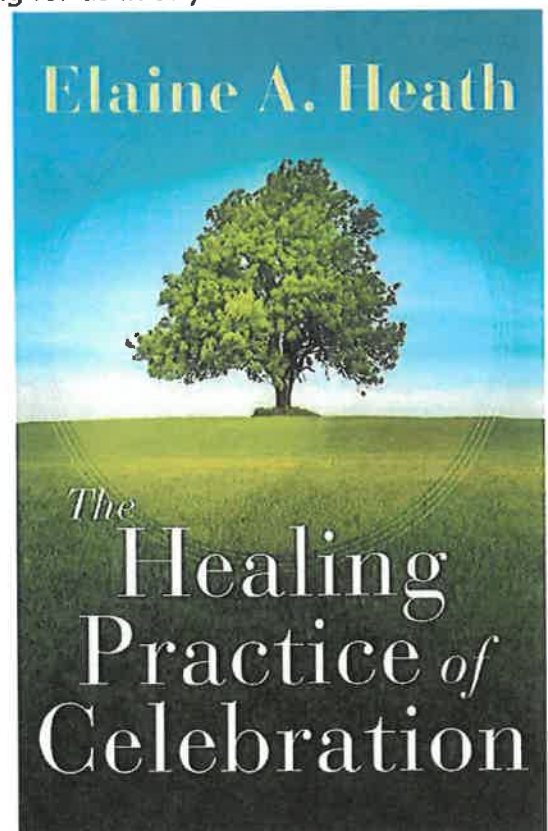
—Revelation 21:5

I stumbled across this transformational little book by Elaine Heath called, *The Healing Practice of Celebration*. It was an accident that I found this book, but gosh I am so glad I did. Heath argues that the "practice of celebration" can be healing for us in any moment of our lives — and that the main reason for celebration is found in the verse shared above: God is making everything new. Everything. Every thing.

Heath says:

God is always much bigger than we think, more merciful, more loving, and more intent upon our well-being than we know. The practice of Christian celebration during [any] season does not mean you have to deny your experience or pretend to feel differently than you do. It means honestly naming what you are feeling and thinking to God and, if possible, a trusted friend... To pray this way is an act of celebration, trusting that God is leading you through the wilderness just as God did with Jesus.

We have been through so much recently as a church. There has been so much change in the last 3 years not just for our community, but for the world. As I reflect on all the amazing and hard things that have been going on in our lives, and not discounting those hard moments at all, I wonder how the practice of celebration might heal us? What would it look like if we committed ourselves to celebrate? What would it be like to trust that no matter what is going on, God is truly making everything new? What would our lives, our hearts, our relationships be if we trusted that God is healing them, reconciling us, giving us reason to celebrate?



The other reason we might celebrate — beyond the incredible good news that God is making everything new(!) — is because of what God has already done. John 1:14 says, “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood” (The MSG). God cares enough about our everyday, beautiful, hard, gorgeous, painful, joy-filled lives to come and be with us. Show us another way. Offer us hope, grace and love.

Now, I know that this flowery, optimistic picture may not fit your life right now. Maybe you are feeling stress, tension, heartache or pain. Maybe you are in a difficult season and the thought of “celebration” is as far from your mind and heart as is possible. If that is the case, I encourage you to try on Isaiah 40 with me, a chapter I’ve been reading daily. Seriously, stop for a second. Take a breath. Then another one. Then one more. Now slowly read Isaiah 40:28-31:

Don't you know? Haven't you heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He doesn't grow tired or weary. His understanding is beyond human reach, giving power to the tired and reviving the exhausted. Youths will become tired and weary, young men will certainly stumble; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will fly up on wings like eagles; they will run and not be tired; they will walk and not be weary.

Every time we choose to believe and hope and trust that God is the kind of God who renews us, heals us, comforts us, we can celebrate the love God has for all creation. Every time we choose to lean in, share our pain and doubt, we can celebrate that God is, indeed, making all things new. Every time we choose to clench our fists around the edge of our Bibles as we read with pain, tears or anger that God is on the way, already here, we can celebrate. **Celebration is a choice.** It's not a choice to ignore the reality of our world. It's a choice to believe, have faith, to hope with God for the new-creating of all the world.

I wonder what celebration looks like for you in this season. How can you choose to hope and trust and believe in God? How can you choose to celebrate the tiny miracles of each day? How can you offer your pain and need to God and believe that in that offering, you are celebrating God's faithfulness? What is possible with the God who took on flesh and blood and moved right into our neighborhood? What healing might we find in the practice of celebration?

I want so badly for all of us to know joy. I want there to be joy as we gather and joy as we go. I long for celebration in our community — for healing and reconciliation and peace, deep peace. I want us to know happiness in all we do, in who we are. I believe, deep in me, that joy is possible always. Frederick Buechner says, “Joy is a mystery because it can happen anywhere, anytime, even under the most unpromising circumstances, even in the midst of suffering, with tears in its eyes.”

Friends, I'm practicing celebration — not perfectly, but I'm committed to trying. I believe celebrating God's presence and the promise of God's newness can be healing. So, will you celebrate with me? Will you rejoice with me? Will you lean into the possibility of God's peace and believe that practicing celebration may just be what heals the world?

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Cole

MOTHER'S DAY BLESSING...

"To the Moms Who Are"

To the Moms who are struggling,
to those filled with incandescent
joy.

To the Moms who are
remembering children who have
died, and pregnancies that
miscarried.

To the Moms who decided other
parents were the best choice for
their babies, to the Moms who
adopted those kids and loved
them fierce.

To those experiencing frustration
or desperation in infertility.

To those who knew they never
wanted kids, and the ways they
have contributed to our shared world.

To those who mothered colleagues, mentees, neighborhood kids, and anyone who needed it.

To those remembering Moms no longer with us.

To those moving forward from Moms who did not show love, or hurt those they should have cared for.

Today is a day to honor the unyielding love and care for others we call 'Motherhood,' wherever we have found it and in whatever ways we have found to cultivate it within ourselves.

May you be blessed with grace, peace, comfort, hope, joy and love in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.



FROM PASTOR COLE...

I want to express my deep gratitude and incredible joy that Lindsay, James and I have been appointed to stay another year at Maggie Valley United Methodist Church. Our time with you all has been special for so many reasons. It is the place we welcomed our son, where we've connected with people I now consider close friends and where we have seen God at work in amazing ways. We are so grateful and so excited for another year at Maggie Valley UMC!

Along with our excitement is our hope that we will continue to grow. We want to get to know you more, to deepen our relationships. We also want to see the vital ministries of this community continue to change hearts and lives.

I trust and hope that God is doing something exciting at MVUMC. None of that would be possible without you and the beautiful way God is using you! So, THANK YOU for welcoming us back again. I look forward to more hope and more love being spread in all we say and do.

With thanks, Grace & Peace,
Pastor Cole, Lindsay and "Sweet Baby James"

PRAYER CONCERNS...

Our Congregational Care Group meets once a month to update the list. The list will change monthly. If you know someone who needs to be added to the list or needs to remain on the list more than a month, please contact Belinda. Please pray for those below and send them a card if you would like to.

General Prayers:

John & Pat Burton, Kathy Cascioli, Robert D'Amico, Grace Heger, Peggy Martin, Jim Miller, Neil Napolitano, Jim Neely, Brenda O'Keefe, Dave Pickens, Barb Planchock & family, Lisa Rhoden, Tom Wilson



Congregational Care Team

Those in hospital and/or surgeries:

Homebound/Nursing Home:

Becky Bender, Lady Hughes- Maggie Valley Nursing & Rehab, Patricia Burton-Gail Pace- Silver Bluff, Phyllis Jackson- Smoky Mtn Nursing Home, Clarissa Fisher-Florida Kathryn Brannen, Willard Dockery, Joe & Helen Duke, Brenda Griswold, Jeanette Miller, Dave Pickens, Charlie & Rena Upright, David Wagner

This month please be in prayer for Educators. As the school year begins to wrap up, pray with us that teachers, administrators and all those in the school system can finish strong. Pray that students might stay focused and finish the year with joy and courage.



May

2023

April							June							
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
						1						1	2	3
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	25	26	27	28	29	30		

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30 Connections Sunday School (9:15am) — Grace Room Worship (10:30am)	1 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30pm)	2 "Sacred Seeing" (7:30am) — Parking Lot CPR Training (5-7:30pm) — HCC Waynesville Annex	3 Food Pantry (10-12) Bible Study (6-7:30pm) — Grace Classroom	4 Pastor's Bible Study (9am) — Fellowship Hall UMW (2pm) — Fellowship Hall	5 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	6 Pete Planchock Celebration of Life (3pm) — Sanctuary/Fellowship Hall
7 Connections Sunday School (9:15am) Worship (10:30am) Reception for Cleaning/Custodians (11:40am)	8 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30pm)	9 Food Pantry (10-12) Bible Study (6-7:30pm) — Grace Classroom Youth Group (6-7:30pm) — Library	10 Pastor's Bible Study (9am) — Fellowship Hall	11 Pastor's Bible Study (9am) — Fellowship Hall	12 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	13 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall
14 Connections Sunday School (9:15am) Worship (10:30am)	15 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30pm)	16 One Board Meeting (6pm) — Fellowship Hall	17 Food Pantry (10-12) Bible Study (6-7:30pm) — Grace Classroom	18 Pastor's Bible Study (9am) — Fellowship Hall Men's Group (5:30pm) — Grace Classroom	19 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	20 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall
21 Connections Sunday School (9:15am) Worship (10:30am) Tourist Game - Leave church (11:45)	22 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30pm)	23 In God's Creation Hike (9am) — Parking Lot	24 Food Pantry (10-12) Bible Study (6-7:30pm) — Grace Classroom Youth Group (6-7:30pm) — Library	25 Pastor's Bible Study (9am) — Fellowship Hall	26 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	27 Men's Breakfast (8am) — Fellowship Hall
28 Connections Sunday School (9:15am) — Grace Room Worship (10:30am)	29 OFFICE CLOSED Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30pm) <i>closed</i>	30 Food Pantry (10-12) Bible Study (6-7:30pm) — Grace Classroom	31 Food Pantry (10-12) Bible Study (6-7:30pm) — Grace Classroom	1 Pastor's Bible Study (9am) — Fellowship Hall	2 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	3 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall

ANNOUNCEMENTS...

Our Church Food Pantry operates on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00am until noon. We are asking that everyone in the congregation **bring SHAMPOO, TOOTHBRUSHES, SOAP/BAR, INSTANT OATS, CANNED FRUIT, COOKIES, and RAMEN NOODLES this month.** Personal hygiene items are appreciated also. Thank you for helping!

"Sacred Seeing" is a way of seeing the world with the eyes of the heart. If I'm being honest, that sounds like something that may be hard to do or only for "really spiritual" people (whatever that means), but it's a practice I hope we can all try! **We will meet on Tuesday, April 4th at 7:30am in the Fellowship Hall.**

Pastor Cole's Bible Study meets on Thursday mornings at 9:00am in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited.

The UMW Grace Circle meeting will meet on Thursday, May 4th at 2:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. The program is on prayer by Vee Moskow. All women are welcome!

Don't forget, Mother's Day is Sunday, May 14th.

The One Board will meet on Tuesday, May 16th at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

All "Love in Action" articles for June are due to Belinda by Thursday, May 18th.

There are two opportunities each month for men to gather. The Men's Group will meet in the Daisy Classroom at 5:30pm on Thursday, May 18th. The Men's breakfast will be on Saturday, May 27th at 8:00am in the fellowship hall. All men are invited.

The church office will be closed on Monday, May 29th for Memorial Day.

This year's date for the **Holiday Boutique is Saturday, December 3rd.** **October 1st,** we will begin accepting donations of slightly used men and women's clothing, handbags, shoes, jewelry, scarfs, Christmas, and nice gift items.

This is an important mission here at Maggie Valley UMC with proceeds going to our food ministries. Last year the boutique raised over \$5,000. The money was given to the Shepherd's Table and the Food Pantry. Please contact Judi Ferris at 828.734.0156 or Pastor Cole for any questions.

On May 21st after the church service, we will be going to a Tourist Game in Asheville, NC. We will leave church around 11:45 for the game at 1:05. If you are interested in attending, please contact Belinda to sign up. The tickets are \$9.50.

The youth group will meet on Wednesday, May 10th and Wednesday, May 24th at 6:00pm in the library. Dinner will be served. Anyone 18 and under are invited to attend. **If you can provide a meal in May, please call Belinda to sign up.**

"In God's Creation" Hiking Group will meet at the church at 9am on Tuesday, May 23rd. We plan to hike in the Smoky Mountains, at the Kaphart Prong Trail. The hike is four miles up and back (we may do less). It is easy, and a good, pretty river walk. Pack a lunch, water, and rain gear. **Contact Judi Ferris at (828) 734-0156 if you want to sign up.**

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES...

HAPPY MAY BIRTHDAYS!

1	Marilyn Medford	18	Kim Tomlin
3	Ruth Smith	21	Sandra Morris
5	Doug Sisk	23	Mary Caruso
10	Mark Strayer	23	Kendall Williamson
11	Dale Howell	27	Judy Kossman
15	Sue Shirley	30	Shirley Saxton
17	Linda Carver		



HAPPY MAY ANNIVERSARY!

10	Selena & Jeff Williamson
21	Sarah & Eric Davis (2011)
21	Jessica & Jason Kanupp (2016)

Do you see a birthday or anniversary that is missing in here? Let us know! We try our best to keep our records up to date, but we know we might be missing someone (even you!). Please share any updated information you have so we can celebrate with you!

BELINDA MARR, TREASURER'S REPORT...
 Monthly Financial Report for March 2023



**Treasurer
 Report**

March		
Needed for Budget	\$	\$23,882.98
Expenses	\$	\$28,750.79
Offerings	\$	\$20,354.51
Over/Under	\$	(\$8,396.28)

THANK YOU'S...

Dear Belinda and Church Family

*I received a Card today from the Prayer Group
 I was really needing a pick me up
 Please, Thank everyone for holding me up before the Lord 🙏
 There is nothing on this Earth that compares to people who are willing to pray
 more than anything else. Where is the key to everything!
 My health May be declining
 But I've been here many times before, and you know what?, God has always been
 good to me even during the times that I could not currently see it.
 God has given me 16 more years on this Earth that has confounded every doctor
 specialist University hospital the Mayo clinic and guess who got the glory for it?
 God
 Your mission is called, love in action
 There's No greater Love than praying for someone!
 God has even giving me , all of you!
 That in itself is a miracle and Grace*

*Love and Prayers always
 Sincerely
 Dave Pickens*

Dear MVUMC,

*Thanks for letting us out of towners join in on the Easter Egg Hunt! We had a lot
 of fun and you were so welcoming!!*

Brittney McAllister





THANK YOU...

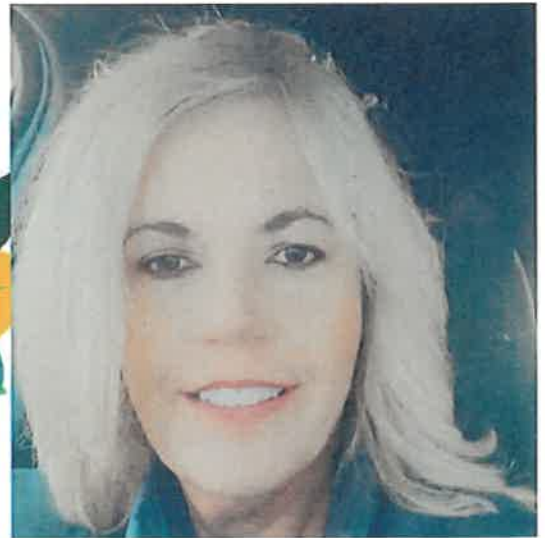
Closing a chapter is never easy. Transitions and new beginnings can be good, but are still hard. We are facing one of those moments in the church right now. Beginning on June 1st, the cleaning and custodial work of the church that is currently being done by 4 different people will merge into one position. That means that May 31st will be the last day as custodian/janitor for Gene & Shirley Saxton, Chrystal Carver and Ginger Revis (and her crew).

The board would like to share how incredibly grateful we are for the service of these people to the church. Their careful attention to the care of our facilities has helped make the ministries of this church possible.

There are several reasons the board has decided to make this change. First, it will allow for simplified communication for the work. When 4 people are cleaning different parts of the church or doing the upkeep, it can be challenging and leave more room for miscommunication. This change will also see the church save several thousands of dollars. Finally, having one person doing this work will streamline our ability to plan, work with outside groups and continue the ministries of the church.

On May 7th immediately after worship we will have a reception for Gene, Shirley, Chrystal and Ginger. You are invited to bring a card or some token of appreciation as we celebrate the faithful ways they have served this community and made all our lives better.

THANK YOU Gene, Shirley, Chrystal, Ginger, Peggy, Hazel and Beth for all you have done!! We love you and are so very grateful!



Maggie Valley UMC Worship Services –10:30 am

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Rev. Mike Shirley, Assistant Pastor

Vacant, Pianist & Choir Director

Janice Rogers, Organist

Belinda Marr, Administrative Assistant

"Knowing Christ, Growing Faith, Serving Others"

Maggie Valley United Methodist Church

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On the web at www.maggieumc.org

