



The Williams Bell

Williams Memorial Presbyterian Church
4700 Beatties Ford Road
Charlotte, NC 28216-2845

Vol. 58

March/April 2020

No. 3/4



Spring had come to the small coal camp in the mountains of Kentucky. My brother Dan and I were young then. The Coffey boys—Earl, Leonard, and Daniel—who lived in a small house by the railroad tracks dropped by our home. Earl, the oldest and about 11, chewed tobacco and brown stains tracked down from the corners of his mouth to his chin. They carried empty lard buckets. They asked if we wanted to dig some sassafras roots with them. We would have to climb up the mountain to find the trees.

We walked up a deeply rutted mining road. The redbud trees were flowering, and I heard birdsong. After about a half an hour, we came to a stand of sassafras trees. The Coffeys set out to work, deftly digging up roots, cutting them, shaking the dirt off them and putting them in the buckets. The pungent sap dripped from the roots.

I grew quickly bored and wandered off. Soon, I found myself surrounded by trees adorned with large white flowers. They were dogwoods and, unlike the shrubs at my grandmother's house, they reached into the sky, possibly twenty feet.

The cross-shaped blossoms bore rust-colored marks on the petals. They brought the promise of life and beauty in what has seemed for so long seemed asleep and lifeless. In Sunday School, I learned about the Legend of the Dogwood and how the flower symbolized the cross of Jesus and the rust-stained petals His blood. I learned that the flower was a symbol of rebirth and resurrection, of purity and Easter.

Many years later, I remembered the time when we, who lived in a bleak mining camp, where houses were shrouded in coal ash and stark trees rattled in winter's wind. Then suddenly how the sun and the rain joined together bringing the promise of what was to come: warmth and lush greenery. We would welcome in spring the green grass beneath our bare feet And this is the season when we welcome Easter.

I love this time of year, it's like we can hear the earth joining our cries of hallelujah on Easter. After death comes life, out of darkness comes light, out of hopelessness comes hope. We see this truth played out in the earth around us as we prepare to hear the holy stories once again.

New Testament scholar, N.T. Wright, reminds us that Easter is always something that plays out in the earth around us, not in some other distant world or in some far-removed heaven. He writes,

“Jesus’ resurrection is the beginning of God’s new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. That, after all, is what the Lord’s Prayer is about.” At Easter we don’t just celebrate our hope for life after death, we celebrate our hope for life now, for new life filled with the hope and love of heaven now. We celebrate our hope for change and transformation. At Easter we are surprised by hope, surprised by God’s insistence that nothing, not even death itself, can quash our hope for newness and for tastes of heaven here and now. Every time we pray “thy kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven” we voice that Easter hope for touching heaven and changing earth.

Where do you need some hope? What feels like a tomb in your life, like a tree in winter seemingly lifeless and asleep? We lift those places up to God with prayers that remember God’s faithfulness. Where do you see hope? Where do you see signs of God’s newness, signs of love, signs of heaven here and now? We hold those places in our heart as we prepare for Holy Week, for the cross and the empty tomb. And I will be thinking of my childhood and the dogwood forest.

In Christ’s Love,
Pastor John

Congregational Meeting will be held on March 1st to elect Elders class of 2021.

Fun and Fellowship Plans:

March meeting—Meet for lunch at Olive Garden on Tuesday March 10th at 11:30

April Meeting –April 14th location to be announced

March Birthdays

13 th	Luke Jordan	26 th	Nathaniel Jones, Jr.
14 th	Don Fisher, Amy Morgan	27 th	Betty Brown
17 th	Merlin Fidler.	30 th	Marilyn Earnhardt
21 st	Bill Hassell		

April Birthdays

19th – Ty Leatherwood

Join us for Pancake Breakfast during the Sunday School Hour – Sunday March 1st

Easter Lilies – deadline March 15th

Williams Memorial Presbyterian Church is offering lilies for purchase to be placed in the Sanctuary during for Easter. The flowers can be dedicated in honor or in memory of someone if you choose. The lilies are \$11.00 each (6" stem).

Orders Due by March 15th

To place an order please use the below form and return with the payment to Williams Memorial Presbyterian Church 4700 Beatties Ford Road Charlotte, NC 28216. Make checks payable to Williams Memorial Presbyterian Church and write *lily* on the memo line.

Name : _____

Number: _____

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

Williams Bell Deadlines Our goal is to make the Bell available on the last Sunday of the month. In order to make that deadline please provide March/April Bell submissions by April 19th

In the event of an emergency or a phone tree request please contact Pastor John, Cell 941.704.0561 or john-nelson.pope@montreat.edu

Memorials Received:

In Memory of Eddie Stroupe, Bill McConnell and Moffat Honeycutt Jr from Laura Stroupe
In Memory of Robert and Bett Eastman from Janice and Brober Bearden

61st Annual Trinity UMC BBQ Thursday, March 5th - 11am Until

Cost: \$10.00 per plate or 3 sandwiches \$10.00 per pound

Prayer Request for:

Members and Friends... *Florence Alexander, Roy Baker, Janet Hubbard, Diane Keever, Nancy & Dickson Skipper, James Watson, and Rev. Phillip Williams.*

Members in the extended community *Lydia Pope.*

Those in military service

US Army –*Sam Caldwell, Justin Jackson* US Army Reserve – *Benjamin Glover*
US Coast Guard – *Matthew Baker*

Volunteers & Helpers for 2020

USHERS

March: Marc Leatherwood, Laura Stroupe

April: Wendy Leatherwood, Alex Leatherwood

June: Ty Leatherwood, Ted Auten

August: Lisa Fisher,

October: Alex & Mary Leatherwood

December: Ty Leatherwood, Jon Leatherwood

May: John Auten, Laura Stroupe

July: Nancy Lewis,

September: John Auten, Sarah Kiser

November: Marilyn Earnhardt, Ted Auten

COLLECTION TABULATORS

March: Nancy Lewis, Bobbie Reid

April: Amy Auten, Kevin Auten

June: Kevin Auten, Lisa Fisher

August: Don Fisher, Mark Auten

October: John Auten, Amy Auten

December: Don Fisher, Mark Auten

May: Mark Auten, Jon Leatherwood

July: Marc Leatherwood, John Auten

September: Nancy Lewis, Kevin Auten

November: Bobbie Reid, Lisa Fisher

COMMUNION SERVERS

March: Laura Stroupe

April: Wendy Leatherwood

June: Nancy Lewis

August: Lisa Fisher

October: Ted Auten

December: Jon Leatherwood

May: Mark Auten

July: Amy Auten

September: Sarah Kiser

November: Fred Hunter

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March/April 2020

Phone 704 392-8816

E-mail wmpcsecretary1885@yahoo.com

Sunday Schedule

10:00 am Sunday School

11:00 am Worship Service

Church Staff

John-Nelson Pope – Pastor

Billie McConnell – Music Director

Ted Auten – Custodian

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*Amy Auten – Editor Secretary*

*Wendy Leatherwood – Financial Secretary*