

Pastors Note

After nearly 18 months of healthcare issues, I can attest to the need for God’s help and the healing power of prayer in times of ill health and loss. And it seems even harder when we suffer those issues and losses during the Holiday Season. “It is when things go wrong, when good things do not happen, when our prayers seem to have been lost, that God is most present. We do not need the sheltering-wings when things go smoothly. We are closest to God in the darkness, stumbling along blindly” (Madeleine L’Engle). We are so blessed by God even in the worst of times because there is always hope in Christ. It is that driving force of the Holy Spirit that inspires and leads us toward the victory in Christ that otherwise is nothingness.

This time of year, I am reminded of my stepdad Isaac Deaton, who died on December 11, 1988, which sometimes feels oh so long ago yet at other times feels like yesterday. He taught me a love for the land, farming, and raising animals that I share with my son William, who, though he lives in town, has discovered gardening, and reminds me of my younger days and working our garden that was the size of a football field and produced an assortment of crops that were canned and frozen for us and sold to others for a little extra income. Many of the things we buy at the store now when I was growing up were on a shelf in a Mason (or Ball) jar or in a freezer, which included vegetables and fresh meat that tasted better than any store-bought item.

After officiating the funeral of Jim Schaffhauser on Monday afternoon, I came across a Scripture that reminded me of the hope we have in those who have gone on to the church triumphant; it says: [The] souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster and their going from us to be their destruction, but they are at peace” (Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-3, Apocrypha). I cannot think of any greater hope than God’s promise that we will see our loved ones again in the afterlife in a heavenly place forever and ever. It was inspiring to hear the stories of Jim Schaffhauser’s family and friends and his life built in multiple communities across the country yet it remained intimate in his relationships and friendships.

We are beginning Advent, which is the beginning of Christian Year on December 3, 2023, and will be the RCL Year B, which is one of the resources in which I choose the Scripture and Psalter for our weekly Sunday morning worship sermons. Moreover, I am beginning my sixth month of my appointment to Marvell and Lexa and looking forward to a great 2024 in Philips County. As we build our local relationships and continuing United Methodist pastoral ministry, I covet your prayers and want you to know I am praying for you, our congregations, and community. And I want to thank you for all you do to make our congregations and community better with your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

Bro. Tom Mullins

Calendar for the Week

<b>Wednesday</b> 9:00 a.m. Exercise 5:00 p.m. BreakThrough Youth 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice <b>Friday</b> 9:00 a.m. Exercise <b>Sunday</b> 8:45 a.m. Lexa Worship 9:00 a.m. Marvell Sunday School	<b>Sunday</b> 10:00 a.m. Marvell Worship 2:30 p.m. Marvell Christmas Parade <b>Monday</b> 9:00 a.m. Exercise <b>Wednesday</b> 9:00 a.m. Exercise 5:00 p.m. BreakThrough Youth
---	--

<b>STEWARDSHIP REPORT</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE</b>
2023 Budget	Lexa Worship
Needed each week	Marvell Sunday School
Received this week	Marvell Worship
Capital Improvement	

HONORARIUMS/MEMORIALS

Special donations for honorariums & memorials need to be in by December 17; get your list to Nina.

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent  
The Necessity of Watchfulness  
I Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37  
Hymns 196, 211  
Lexa Hymns 234, 238, 246