



I once heard a minister say that people would be more grateful if they were more thoughtful. With this in mind, I looked back at the year 2020. I found that it was easy to think of the year as horrible, a year that cannot end soon enough, a challenge in many ways. Looking back, I saw that I had struggled, as we all have, with COVID-19 and its physical, mental, emotional, and economic complications through much of the year. I have lost loved ones to the disease as some of you have. Looking forward, I see more of the same challenges for the foreseeable future. Yet, in the review, I still found much for which I and you can be grateful.

Throughout 2020, I had a job and a steady source of income. I may have been sick, but I also had health insurance so I could see a doctor. It may not have been the salary I

thought I deserved for the work performed or the health care coverage I wanted, but I had both the job and the insurance coverage. As a result, I am in a far better position than millions of others in this county, and for that I am grateful. I did not stand in food lines or sit in cars in food lines in order to place food on my table. I did not go to bed hungry, and no family members went to bed hungry. I did not worry about eviction from an apartment or the loss of my home due to foreclosure because either I had no job or my wages were reduced. What I have far outweighs what I do not have, and for this I am grateful. I think these blessings were in most, if not, all of our lives. Whatever we have faced this year, we still have reason to be thankful.

I feel grateful, and I feel the need to express that gratefulness with action. I want to give something to those who have less than I do,

not that I am rich by any means. It just seems the right thing to do especially at this time of the year, this time of the Greatest Gift. As my action, I intend to donate some of the money that would normally go to Christmas gifts for family and friends to nonprofit organizations in my community which are using their resources to meet the needs of those struggling due to the economic crisis. For me, that means making giving money to the local food pantry and the animal shelter. People need food, and the animal shelters are desperate to provide food and shelter to animals which have been surrendered by their owners because they can no longer care for them. This is how I hope to make a difference as the year ends.

I ask that each of you review your year. If you feel blessed as I do, I ask that you consider taking some action to demonstrate that gratefulness. You may want to adopt a family or a just one child from a family and provide whatever assistance you can to help out. You might want to contribute to a local or national nonprofit which is committed to providing aid and assistance in times of trouble. The nonprofit could be a food pantry, a domestic violence shelter, or a faith-based

charity. If you can, please go beyond gratitude and take some action. Remember too that making a cash donation is not the only way of contributing. Contributions can be in the form of nonperishable can goods, toys, clothing, and even your time. Charities need volunteers to sort, pack and distribute.

Finally, I leave you with two scriptures, ACTS 20:35: "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Also, keep in mind LUKE 6:38 "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Be well blessed. Stay safe.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Minnie P. Howard is the Managing Attorney at the Oxford Office of North MS Rural Legal Services. This was an email she sent to the program staff. It's timeliness and appeal made it appropriate to share with everyone.

OFUMC Outreach Ministry

The Oxford First UMC Outreach Mission Ministry was busy in December, providing food and toys to those in need. On behalf of the Outreach Mission we wish to thank each of you for donating to help with toys, food, shoes, apparel and other gifts of love for needy families. The church building was closed, but the heart of God's people were and still are open to be the hands and feet of Jesus! Oxford First Outreach Mission continues to help feed needy families. If

anyone knows of a family that needs food, or if you want to donate food, please notify Min. Gracie Spearman.

Our toy ministry was a great success also. We helped needy families with bikes and other toys in addition to our donation to Mary Cathey Head Start Center. Serving others one person at a time. God Will Not Forget!

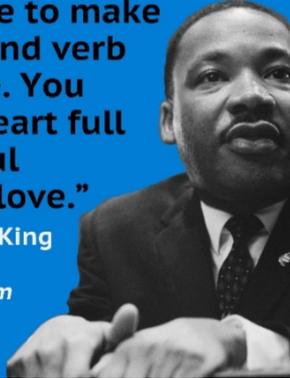
Pictures follow:



“Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

--Dr. Martin Luther King

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I know 2020 was an unexpected, difficult, challenging year for us all, but God kept us under the shadow of the Almighty! for that I tell him Thank You. I encourage each of us to start this 2021 year off with prayer. I encourage the church family to look forward with our hope and expectations from God! He delights in answering our prayers when we come to him boldly to the throne of grace with expectation and thanksgivings. The Word of God lets us know in (HEBREW 4:16) that we can come to God in prayer boldly. We can come to God boldly in his will no matter who we are or what we have done, but based on who Christ is and what He done for our lives by his birth, death and resurrection. I encourage us all to be about our Fathers business, by serving others, let love abound and go out and make Disciples of all nations for Christ. According to God's Word "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness. (PSALMS 65:11). EXPECT GODS GOODNESS THIS YEAR!

-Min. Gracie Spearman

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