



# Jacob's Ladder



A NEWSLETTER OF OXFORD FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Sapada Thomas, Pastor

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## Clergy Appreciation Day



Sunday, October 10<sup>th</sup> we celebrated Clergy Appreciation Day at Oxford First UMC. It is a day that's celebrated on the second Sunday of October. This day reminds us to thank our clergy for the work they do. Being a clergy has its good days and bad. Yet all of our clergy leaders need to be recognized for their work and efforts. Think of how difficult it was at first for our Clergy to survive live streaming as they preached and ministered to empty seats for some time during a worldwide pandemic, which is still occurring, and they still enjoy teaching God's word!!!! Our Clergy continue to show acts of kindness as they strive to meet the needs of the congregation and the community. We took the time to thank them for the work they do. If they have helped you in any way or have shown you any acts of kindness, let

them know how much you appreciate them. On that day, we said Thank you to (pictured above from l. to r.) Pastor Sapada Thomas, Rev. Mattie Gipson, Rev. Frank Gipson, Minister Gracie Spearman, and Minister Tressie Johnson.

We invite you to join our congregation in celebrating our clergy. Recognize them for their leadership, compassion, stewardship, and faith. As we move forward, if you are led to, you can thank one or all of them with a small token of your appreciation...it might be a meal, or a card, or a note, or just a plain ***thank you very much*** for your acts of kindness...whatever you chose to do will brighten up our clergy's day and make them feel appreciated.



OFUMC honored its clergy with gifts and plaques on Sunday, October 17, 2021. Pictured above (from left to right) with their gifts are Min. Johnson, Min. Spearman, Pastor Thomas, and Minnie Milliner, standing in for Rev. Frank and Rev. Mattie Gipson.

A promotional banner for Laity Sunday 2021. On the left is a portrait of Dr. Margaret T. Gipson, an older woman with glasses and a blue polka-dot top. The banner has an orange and white color scheme. Text includes: "October 17, 2017", "LAITY SUNDAY 2021", "2 TIMOTHY 1:3-7", and "RISE AND UP! REVIVE GOD'S GIFT."

I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

—2 TIMOTHY 1:3-7

**Dr. Margaret T. Gipson, Lay Servant, was the keynote speaker for OFUMC's 2021 Laity Sunday Celebration. What follows is an abridged presentation of her speech.**

Laity Sunday celebrates the ministry of all Christians to love God and all people. On Laity Sunday, we lift up the vocation of all to follow the way of Jesus and lead others to

Him—particularly as we remember the gift of those persons who loved us into leadership.

When we remember the faith of our spiritual mothers, grandmothers, sisters, sons, brothers, and fathers, we find our own hearts reignited “to serve and witness in deeds and words that heal and free.” This memory of grace crossing our paths directs us toward spiritual growth opportunities that can only spring from an authentic and consistent relationship with other people, especially those beyond the comfort and security of our church walls. As we awaken to the voice of Christ calling us to believe and be healed, we discover that the call of God almost always comes from unexpected people and places, since they are the all-called, too. So, we will rise up, remember grace, and recognize that the fire of God’s gift has already been at work in every life. And through awakening, memory, and the shared songs of others, we will trust, heal, and see a revival for a time such as this.

Laity Sunday is a day set aside to remember that every person is invited to embody God’s restoration project of healing love, justice, and world repair. It is a special Sunday

defined by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church “to celebrate the ministry of all Christians.” Laity Sunday is one way to express the conviction that all are called to participate in God’s mission and live this calling through the ministry of the church.

God is calling all people (laity) to wake up, to rise up, and **REVIVE** God’s gift!!

**Repent:** the gift of God is not without repentance and must be used and exercised!

**Exalt Christ:** fear is not of God! It is Satan.

**Value Christ:** He will be there when you Rise Up! Revive God’s Gift!

**Intercede:** speak about God on behalf of others!

**Volunteer:** God’s gift with a deep level of commitment, joy, and reward!

**Evangelize:** tell your stirring story about your experience with God!

Rise Up! Paul is reminding you to Fan into the Flame the Gift of God, so you can Revive (make the gift come alive that God has given you)!

**BELOW: Sister Niler P. Franklin, Program Coordinator presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Dr. Gipson**



# Outreach Ministry

“I will continue to distribute blankets, sleeping bags, warm clothing, and food on a regular basis, in the hope that modest efforts will give some comfort to those people we are able to help,” said Mohamed Al-Fayed.

On behalf of Oxford First UMC Mission Outreach and Food Ministry, Pastor Sapada Thomas, Rev. Mattie Gipson, and Min. Gracie Spearman, we would like to thank each and every one of our volunteers for your modest effort, in helping to distribute food to 180 families to put a little more food on their tables on Wednesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>. “Every charitable act is a stepping stone toward Heaven,” said Henry Ward Beecher. God Will Not Forget!

*Jacob's Ladder* is a monthly publication of Oxford First United Methodist Church. EDITOR/PUBLISHER: Clarence H. Franklin. ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Niler P. Franklin. All rights reserved. Announcements or articles should be submitted to Rev. Sapada Thomas or submitted by e-mail directly to Franklin at [chfrank@panola.com](mailto:chfrank@panola.com). Visit our website at [www.OxfordFirst.org](http://www.OxfordFirst.org) and click on the *Jacob's Ladder* link to view previous month's issues.



**REMINDER: Sunday Worship Service now begins at 9:00 A.M. followed by Sunday School. Join Us!**

**Jacob's Ladder**  
P.O. Box 277  
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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE