Jacob's Ladder

one in the spirit

A Newsletter of Oxford First United Methodist Church

Rev. Charles Seaton, Jr., Pastor

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Rev. Mattie Gipson at Asbury UMC



Rev. Mattie Gipson returned to Asbury United Methodist Church in Holly Springs, MS to speak at its 160th Church Anniversary. Mattie was a student at Rust College and was under watch care at Asbury during her time there. While at Rust, she was named Miss Rust College. Mattie went on to become a pastor in the United Methodist Church and to serve as a District Superintendent for the Mississippi Annual Conference. Pastor Seaton and members of Oxford First UMC journeyed to Ashbury to support her in this venture.

"It's in My Heart"

by Barbara Wortham



"Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem." —NEHEMIAH 2:12A NRSV

The prophet Nehemiah is a great example of a servant leader. Servant leadership is a management philosophy where the goal of the leader is to serve others rather than exercise authority and control over others. Nehemiah was a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia. He heard that the walls of Jerusalem had been destroyed by invaders. Nehemiah's reaction to this sad news was to pray. After praying, he began to plan how he would be able to return to Jerusalem. Due to his close relationship with the king, Nehemiah returned home.

He was met with resistance on every hand. Sanballat and Tobiah were determined to stop Nehemiah's plan. They mocked him. There was no way he could complete the job. Nehemiah prayed for guidance. He delegated the work to different families, giving them ownership in the process. Sanballat and Tobiah were upset when they heard about the progress being made on the wall. They ridiculed and made fun of the people. When that didn't work, they physically attacked the workers. Nehemiah prayed for guidance. He armed the people with weapons to defend themselves. The work continued.

While all of this was going on, the people began to tell Nehemiah about the oppression they were under at the hands

of government officials. The people were in debt. They were being heavily taxed and victimized by high interest rates. Nehemiah prayed for guidance, then advocated for the people. Nehemiah also refused to take the benefits due to him as a governor. Instead, he fed the people.

Once the wall was completed and only needed the finishing touches, Sanballat and Tobiah decided to set Nehemiah up so they could kill him. Nehemiah prayed for guidance, and once again, their plan failed.

What lessons can we learn from Nehemiah?

1. Pray and work.
2. Show sincere concern for the people you encounter.
3. Use your voice to uplift others.
4. Delegate the work.
5. Stay focused on the goal. Don't let your enemies get in the way of fulfilling your purpose.

What has God put in your heart to do for his people?

NOTE: Sister Wortham delivered the 2026 Laity Sunday message on October 18th. This is a summary of her message.



From the Pastor's Desk

Rev. Charles Seaton, Jr.



Walking in The Spirit of God

Oxford First, Walking in the Spirit of GOD is a daily surrender of our hearts, words, and actions to His holy will. As we yield to Him, the fruit of the Spirit becomes evident: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These qualities should shine before our families, among our church members, and throughout a world that desperately needs Jesus the Christ.

Oxford First, thank you for strengthening your walk with GOD. Your prayers, faithful service, loving encouragement, and commitment to His Word make a difference. Through your example, others can see and hear of His loving kindness and tender mercies. Sometimes, the clearest testimony is not spoken from a pulpit but demonstrated through forgiveness at home, compassion toward a neighbor, or patience during a difficult moment.

We must also remember that we all sin and fall short of GOD's glory. None of us walks this lifelong journey perfectly. Yet our failures need not become our dwelling place.

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By GOD's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, we are made righteous—not by our own goodness. When we confess our sins with repentant hearts, He faithfully forgives and cleanses us, restoring our fellowship and strengthening us to continue.

Holiness is not a performance for others; it is a life devoted to the Lord. Because the Lord GOD is holy, we are called to pursue holiness in every part of our living.

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Let us keep walking together, depending upon the Holy Spirit each day. May our families experience His love through us, our church grow stronger in unity, and those who do not yet know Christ witness His transforming power. May every step point beyond ourselves to the Savior whose mercy sustains us and whose grace teaches us to live for Him. Let our lives bear fruit that brings our Father glory.

Love Always,
Pastor C. Seaton

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