



Jacob's Ladder



A NEWSLETTER OF OXFORD FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Sapada Thomas, Pastor

Volume 20, Number 7, July 2020

In-Person Worship Postponed by Rev. Sapada Thomas



James E. Swanson, Sr., Bishop in Residence, Mississippi Episcopal Area requests all United Methodist Churches to cease in-person and drive in church services until further notice due to the increased number of Covid-19 cases in our state. Therefore, we will NOT be resuming in-person worship on the 1st Sunday in August as we had planned. I will wait to hear from the bishop for further instructions on when we can resume in-person worship.

Please continue or start reaching out to our members who do not have Internet or Facebook access to stay connected to them. I will be reaching out to the ones who volunteered to be Class Leaders to connect with certain members this soon to get that started. I will also start holding conference call phone conversations with members on Sunday mornings at 11:00AM to connect with them. We will continue to utilize Facebook on Sunday mornings at 9:00AM for virtual

worship and Wednesday nights at 7:00PM for Bible study.

Please continue to pray for our church as everyone, including me as your pastor,

continue to adjust to these unexpected times we live in. These times may be unexpected, but our God will continue to keep us and bless us in the midst of unexpectancy. Praise God!!!!

Tell The Truth and Shame The Devil

by Clarence H. Franklin

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
JOHN 8:32 KJV

The time has come for us to talk about monuments and symbols. We have seen changes in this country, around the world, in the state of Mississippi, and in Oxford, Mississippi I would not have conceived of before now. Members of Black and minority communities have been crying out trying to expose and shed light on their inequitable treatment by the police and the justice system in this country. A combination of events brought us to this point in time.

The COVID-19 pandemic had everyone self-isolating at home so more people than ever before were eye witnesses to the brutal murder of George Floyd, an innocent Black man, by a heartless police officer, with three other officers standing by observing and doing nothing. This was nothing new however. This kind of brutality against Black people by the police has been going on for a long time. Sadly, even the video recording was not new, going all the way back to the beating of Rodney King. And the policemen who've committed these atrocities almost always did so without consequences. But this time it looks different. It was not just *us* protesting in the streets. No one who believes in God, or consider themselves as human beings could not be moved by this spectacle. People of all races, religions, nationalities, and creeds took to the streets in every state across the nation, and even around the world. The fact that many of these were young people offers hope for the



future. “Black Lives Matter” became a reality for those who had never taken it seriously before. Could this finally be the moment when white Americans wake up to the racial inequalities at the very heart of this nation? A movement has begun to address the systemic racism, and the symbols of that racism that are so prevalent in this country.

Some of the most prevalent symbols of racism in the South are monuments to the

Confederacy. So many Southerners argue vehemently that the Civil War was not fought to preserve slavery, but for “heritage” and “state’s rights,” whatever that is supposed to mean. Allow me to put that fallacy to rest once and for all, with the following words from the state of Mississippi’s Declaration of War against the Union:

In the momentous step which our State has taken of dissolving its connection with the government of which we so long formed a part, it is but just that we should declare the prominent reasons which have induced our course.

Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery-- the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of commerce of the earth. These products are peculiar to the climate verging on the tropical regions, and by an imperious law of nature, none but the black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun. These products have become necessities of the world, and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization. That blow has been long aimed at the institution, and was at the point of reaching its consummation. **There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of abolition, or a dissolution of the Union,** whose principles had been subverted to work out our ruin.

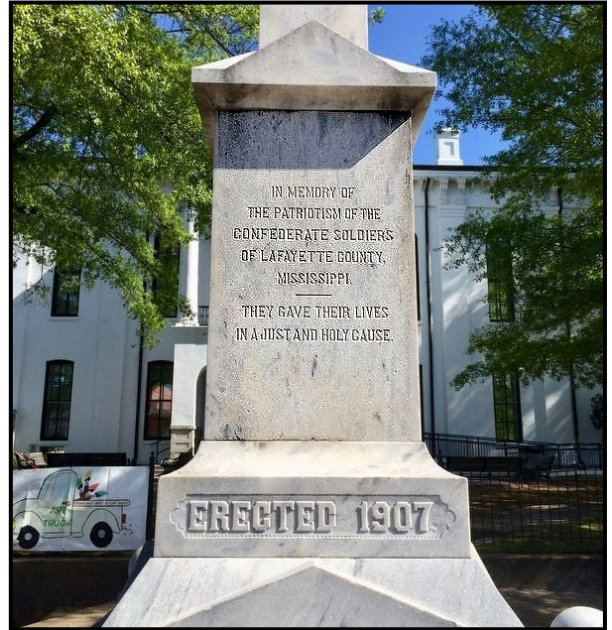
(My emphasis) You can read the entire declaration by Googling: “State of Mississippi Civil War Declaration of War.”

Those who claim the Civil War was fought over anything other than maintaining the institution of slavery are either delusional, ignorant, or just down right racist. The truth is the truth whether it is politically correct or popular.

The good news is that America seems to be taking down some of those monuments. The state of Mississippi has approved changing the state flag, removing the Confederate stars

and bars. But everyone is not on board with these changes. The all-white Lafayette County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to keep the Confederate monument on the Square in Oxford. From the very words of the state’s Declaration of War, it is clear that monuments that celebrate the Confederacy is also celebrating white supremacy and racism.

Because of George Floyd, we have dialog where we have never had it before. The “Black Lives Matter” movement has blossomed like never before. Across the country, people are addressing remedies to the systemic racism in this country for the first time.



I agree wholeheartedly that any symbols of the Confederacy are inherently racist and should be removed, but I do have another concern. Removing the symbols of racism does not remove the racism itself. If we are successful in eliminating them all, will some of our supporters think that that is enough?

We must keep our eyes on the prize. We can't let these monuments and symbols distract us from our ultimate goal. We can't let the current momentum of the movement get side-tracked. We can't slow down until we've reached that day that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. envisioned when "all God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we're free at last!"



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. Visit our website at www.OxfordFirst.org and click on the *Jacob's Ladder* link to view previous month's issues.

Water Ministry



Oxford First UMC will be distributing cases of water to the elderly, the sick and shut-in and those in need. The scheduled delivery dates will be Saturday, July 18th and/or Saturday, July 25th.

Contact Minister Gracie Spearman or call the church at 234-2943 for more information.

Jacob's Ladder
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PLACE
STAMP
HERE