



## Oxford First Moving Forward



Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

--PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14 NIV

In all aspects of life, we find ourselves either going forward, standing still, or falling behind. Clearly, this is true in the church. Many congregations have become complacent and comfortable (the prelude to standing still). And once we are standing still, everyone passes us by and we begin to

fall behind. Oxford First United Methodist Church is having none of this. We are moving forward with all deliberate speed. First, Burns United Methodist Church and Hammitt Hill United Church came together in 2016 to form Oxford First UMC at the old Burns location at 600 Molly Barr Road.

Secondly, we realized that there was little space for expansion and growth there, so we began exploring options to address this situation. After much self-examination and prayer, our Heavenly Father made a way for us to build a new 8,000 plus square foot structure on 102 Dylan Road, next door to Mary Cathey Head Start Center and FNC Park. It is necessary for us to move from the current old Burns location to Hammitt Hill for 6 months while the new building is being

constructed. Consequently, we held our last church service at the old location on Sunday, February 24, 2019, and we closed it in style. Our youth presented a Black History Month program, and we carried the light out of the church for the last time and formed a prayer circle outside the church. Our last service ended with a fellowship meal. This special issue of Jacob's Ladder includes pictures commemorating that day.



As the scripture on page 1 notes, Paul believed in moving ahead. We can't rely on our past laurels or on past reputation. Both Burns and Hammitt had had rich histories. But moving forward is the only way to avoid decline and failure. As a church, we need to think about what it takes to move ahead. In order for us to move into the old Hammitt Hill structure temporarily, extensive renovations and repairs had to be completed. Members of the church worked diligently to do just that so that we could have our first worship service on Sunday, March 3, 2019. We are also including pictures of some of the hard working members that provided the labor for this endeavor.



Ultimately, moving the church forward into the future involves every member. Since we are the church, the church moves only as its people move. All these challenges are personal challenges to each of us. As we get ready to move into our new church we understand that it will be the Lord's Church ... It will be friendly if I am. It will do great

work if I work. It will make generous gifts to many causes if I am generous. It will bring others into its fellowship if I bring them. Its seats will be filled if I fill them. It will be a church of loyalty and love, of faith and service. Therefore, with God's help, we dedicate ourselves to the task of being all these things the church should be.

## The "Final" Soup for Seniors

By Terry Vaughn

The Final "Soup for Seniors" was held on Wednesday, February 12, 2019 at the 600 Molly Barr Road location. Oxford First UMC is moving to a temporary location until our new church is finished. Soup for Seniors will return when we move into our new church this fall. We have totally enjoyed our monthly fellowship with the members of the community. We are looking forward to serving you again in the near future. Please pray that our transition will be a smooth and successful one.



The coordinators, Mrs. Janis Blake and Mrs. Laura Ann Cancer, and our Senior Pastor, Sapada Thomas, thank you very much for allowing us to be a service to you. See you soon. We love you all.

# **The First Annual Prayer Dinner: Praying the Prayers of Dr. Martin Luther King , Jr.**

**By Minister Gracie Spearman**

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

--JAMES 5:16 KJV



Thank God for Pastor Thomas for his God-given vision for our Oxford First UMC family. As part of that vision he asked me to start up the prayer ministry and gave me an outline for the prayer ministry as the Holy Spirit had given to him. I humbly and prayerfully accepted the honor to take part in the vision, and to reach out to the community as part of that vision.

Held on Wednesday, February 20<sup>th</sup> at Oxford First, our prayer dinner was inspired by the Holy Spirit, to pray the prayers of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As I read and studied Dr.

King's prayers, I learned how much the man valued prayer. For example, one of Dr. King's spiritual disciplines as a Pastor was carving out significant time for prayer and meditation. His prayers were heavily informed and enriched with insight and wisdom from a variety of intellectual and spiritual sources, from the Bible and the Judeo-Christian tradition to African American religion. King modeled what it means to be a spiritual leader, and one finds in his prayers words that comfort, challenge, encourage, and empower, and also practical suggestions for developing a rich, disciplined, and healthy prayer life.

As I continued to study his prayers I came across the fact that his last assignment on Earth was to go Memphis TN, to support the sanitation workers in their fight for a living wage. So we were honored to reach out to serve the Oxford/Lafayette Sanitation workers and to invite them as Our Special guest. We are thankful to all of our sanitation workers who keep our city and environment clean. (Remember them in your prayers.) Dr. King said in one of his many lectures that "If a man is called to be a street sweeper, He should sweep streets as Michelangelo painted, or as Beethoven composed music, or

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# Little Miss Blue Review

By Marilyn Barnes

Oxford First's Praise team ministered to the souls of family and friends of the Little Ms. Blue Revue participants on Saturday, February 9. The Little Ms. Blue Revue is sponsored by the Mu Chi Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. as a means to build self-esteem and the leadership skills of the young ladies in our community. To add a special touch to the program the members of the praise team used their spiritual talents to minister to the audience and provide a hallelujah good time. The members of Mu Chi Zeta are truly grateful for these young members as they brought a spiritual happiness to all.

Oxford First participants in the review (pictured at right) are Khashanti Hervey and Rose Barnes.



## Falling In Love With GOD

A 7 Week Study on Traditional Practices to Get Closer to God

Based on the Book:

*The Means of Grace*

by Dr. Rev. Andrew C. Thompson

**March 13: Baptism**

**March 20: Searching the Scriptures**

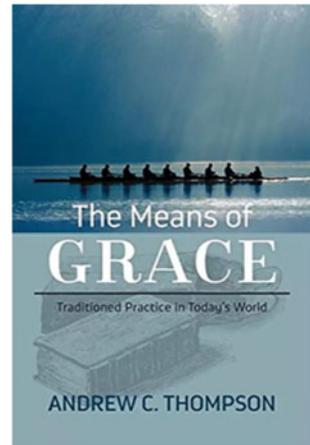
**March 27: Prayer**

**April 3: The Lord's Supper**

**April 10: Fasting**

**April 17: Fellowship**

**April 24: Works of Mercy**



If you are interested, the book for this study can be purchased on Amazon for \$22.88 (paperback) or \$16.95 (Kindle)



## Oxford First U.M.C.

10 CR 181  
Oxford, MS

**Wednesday, March 6, 2019**  
6:30 P.M

Ash Wednesday emphasizes a dual encounter: we confront our own mortality and confess our sin before God within the community of faith. The form and content of the service focus on the dual themes of sin and death in the light of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ.

The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship, and the Imposition of Ashes can be a powerful nonverbal and experiential way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation. This practice is the historic focus of Ash Wednesday observance and gave the day its name. It is traditional to save the palm branches from the previous Passion/Palm Sunday service and burn them ahead of time to produce the ashes for this service. Alternatively, ushers may distribute small cards or pieces of paper on which each person may be invited to write a particular sin or hurtful or unjust characteristic. They may then be brought forward by the ushers following the sermon and placed upon a grate to be burned with palm branches for the ashes.



2019 Lent Sermon Series:

## "The 7 Last Saying of Jesus"

**Ash Wednesday @ 6:30 PM**  
Wednesday, March 6

**Sunday, March 10**  
**"Father, forgive them, for they do not  
know what they do"**  
LUKE 23: 34

**Sunday, March 17**  
**"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with  
me in Paradise"**  
LUKE 23: 43

**Sunday, March 24**  
**"Jesus said to his mother: 'Woman, this is  
your Son,' Then he said to the disciples:  
'This is your mother'"**  
JOHN 19: 26-27

**Sunday, March 31**  
**"My God, my God, why have you forsaken  
me?"**  
MATTHEW 27: 46

**Sunday, April 7**  
**"I Thirst"**  
JOHN 19: 28

**Palm/Passion Sunday**  
**Sunday, April 14**  
**"It is Finished"**  
JOHN 19: 30

**Easter Sunday**  
**Sunday, April 21**  
**"Father, into your hands I commend my  
spirit"**  
LUKE 23: 46

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as Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should



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sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and Earth will pause to say "Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well".

I want to thank Minister Victoria Rollen of Water Valley for her inspirational message on the importance of prayer.

Thank you Oxford First for all of you who came out to help and support the Prayer Ministry. Pray without ceasing.....



*Jacob's Ladder*

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE