



Jacob's Ladder



A NEWSLETTER OF OXFORD FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Sapada Thomas, Pastor

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The Pastor's Point

by

Rev. Sapada Thomas

Lift Every Voice and "Vote"

In 1899, James Weldon Johnson wrote "Lift Every Voice and Sing," as a poem. His brother, John Rosamond Johnson, later came and composed the poem into a song that has come to be known as "The Black National Anthem." In 1900, when "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was composed, Black Americans were reeling on a point of history. "The visibility and influence of African American traditions was growing, but Reconstruction efforts had failed to provide widespread opportunities for financial and educational advancement. Moreover, racism stood ready to close the door Black achievers dared to open." The composition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was a proclamation and a vision for the future. It immediately resonated with Black communities and institutions. Here in the 21st century, we need the same zeal, resonation, enthusiasm and passion that this

song represents, because even years later racism and inequality still exist.

I would ask that members of our church and community be reminded of the power and proclamation of this song. This song has lyrics such as, "ring with the harmonies of Liberty." The liberties which Johnson wrote included "the rights and protections that citizens of African descent in the United States were promised but had not yet received." It also includes language such as, "Let us march on till victory is won." It was a part of many of the marches that our Black community leaders organized and participated in that led to the racial justice movements. Even though today we may not be participating in physical marches as our leaders of the past, we still need to march to the beat of the drums that can change our

lives in the here and now. We not only need to “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” we also MUST “*Lift Every Voice and VOTE.*”

The Point:

There is no question as of if “Everyone” has a “Voice” in our society today, because the truth of the matter is we do. The question remains, are we going to “Lift Our Voice” and let it be heard. We all have a “Voice” when we “Vote.” As your pastor, I would like to encourage everyone to continue to

“Lift Every Voice and Sing” by going out on election day or by absentee voting and “Lift Every Voice and Vote!” It’s our privilege, our duty, and our responsibility.

Reference: Various sections of this Pastoral Point was taken from an online article, *What makes ‘Lift Every Voice and Sing’ so Iconic* written by Faith Karimi and AJ Willingham, September 10, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2020/09/us/lift-every-voice-and-sing-trnd/>

God Bless each of you!!

Oxford First U. M. C.
Church Dedication and Consecration

Sunday, September 28th
102 Dylan Avenue
9:00am

Pastor Sapada Thomas

Special Guest
Rev. Dr. Raigan Miskelly
New Albany District Superintendent

As we Resume In-Person Worship we Celebrate, Consecrate and Dedicate our new Church Building

Oxford First

Showing My Faith By My Works

by Minister Gracie Spearman

“What do it profit brethren if a man say he has faith and have not works. . . If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of food, and one of you say to them, Depart you go in peace and be you warmed and filled, not withstanding you give them not those things that are needful to the body, what fo it profit? Even so faith alone without works is dead. Yes a man might say I have faith and you have works: Show me your faith without your works and I will show you my faith by my works.

—JAMES 2: 14-18 NIV

God has given us many blessings, talents and gifts. It is important for us to share those blessings with our community by helping others. By our actions of helping others we demonstrate our love for God and show our faith by our works. Bring the love of God into our community by sharing and sacrifice. Show even the marginalized that God have not forgotten them. It is rewarding, sometimes difficult work, but as Servants of the Lord Jesus Christ we serve others and bring God's light to them. It's up to us



Oxford First Family to find ways to bring that light, love and goodwill to our community by forgiving one another and learning to work together for the common good. Good intentions only go so far. From there we have to have faith and trust in God, and by our works truly help others by action! So many of you lifted up a standard and took action by whatever time or chance you could and put your hands to work however you could in our mission. I thank you and God will not forget your Labor of love for what you sacrifice. Special thanks to my co-chair

Rev. Mattie Gipson, you Blessed me and gave me hope when I saw you use your luggage carrier to haul food boxes, or Rev. Frank when he hauled boxes until he was exhausted, to those Oxford First women who handle those dollies like any man, to Sister Rhondalyn who fell over in the mud doing God's work, to all the Facebook posts, to Sister Gipson from Beverly standing in for the UMW, to our Pastor who took the time out of his busy busy schedule to show his support, and our member that donated all those \$20 gift certificates. This is how we show the world our Faith by our Works!



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.

To God Be The Glory!

Jacob's Ladder
P.O. Box 277
Oxford, MS 38655

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