



## Words from Woodforest January 2021

### Faith lift: Plans

If you want to make God laugh, plan.

Twenty-nine years ago my cousin Mark and I made a road trip to Wichita Falls from Houston for the funeral of our grandmother. My cousin drove.

Three years ago when I got the call that our oldest cousin Jerry had died at the age of 77, I called Mark and left a message on his voice mail that said, "It's my turn to drive. "

I picked him up at his house at 7 a.m. for our 6 hour drive to Wichita Falls that used to take 9 hours when the speed limit was 55. The plan was that the family would gather at the funeral home at 1:30 and the service would start at 2:30.

When my other cousin Nancy, who had taken the responsibility to care for our cousin, called about the service, she asked me if I would like to take part in the service. When you are a pastor people somehow feel obligated to ask, just like it's assumed you will say the prayer at family meals. Like I did with my daughter's wedding and my son's wedding last year I said that I preferred to just be a family member. She accepted my request of declining her offer. That was the plan.

Mark and I made it to Corsicana and then we stopped. All of Interstate 45 stopped both ways...for 45 minutes. Mark had an app on his phone called WAZE that tells you what is up ahead and it said, "Police action, robbery, shots fired."

When we finally got moving again it delayed us to the point that we pulled into the Funeral Home at 2:55. The 2:30 service hadn't started. They had waited for us. When we found my cousin Nancy she said that the pastor who was scheduled to do the service wasn't able to come. She had called four other pastors who were not able to come. Two out of four were sick and the other two were out of town.

There was another funeral that was just finishing and that pastor had said he would be willing to officiate but I said, "No, let me go to my car to get my book and my Bible."

On Monday night when I was loading my car for the trip I saw my book that I use for weddings and funerals on my desk and at the last minute picked it up. I'm glad I did.

Tennessee Ernie Ford sang Amazing Grace via C.D. I read from Ecclesiastes 3 and Psalm 23 and John 10. My cousin Mark and my cousin Nancy both spoke. I shared a brief meditation and closed by reading from John 14. Another C.D. sang "Abide with Me," and we closed by praying the prayer our Lord taught his disciples to pray. I was a family member, but I also had the privilege of leading worship for my family member as we celebrated the life of one of our own.

Driving back to Houston Interstate 45 was free from Police actions and we made it back to Houston at Midnight. It was a good day. I think God got a good laugh and I certainly got a blessing from the latest of my best laid plans.

Joyful Life Lutheran Church, the last church I served as an interim pastor, had these words painted above the doors to their worship space from Jeremiah 29:11

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, plans for your welfare and not for your harm, to give you a future with hope."

Five years ago who could have predicted what 2020 would be like? Who knows what 2021 holds for us? I don't know about you but I hope there will be some laughter as well as some pleasant surprises in spite of and because of our last minute, unplanned .... plans.

Rev. Dr. Jim Gill

**Committee Chairs 2021.**

Darlene McAlexander- Congregational Life

Courtney Shockey- Christian Education

Julia Prasco- Mission and Outreach

Renee Feltner- Worship

Kaydonna Fox- Personnel, Nominating, Commitment

Johnny Gaskill- Property

**Clerk's Report:**

Membership: 70

Average Attendance: 137



Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your gift ... from your Peace and Global Witness Offering. This is particularly helpful now when so many of the Institute's programs that help generate financial support are on hold during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The events at the Capital this week make the importance of maintaining a high standard of civility, even in the midst of disagreement, clearer than ever. We MUST reclaim civility as the norm within this country and indeed around the world.

Thank you so much for your generous support in making our work possible. Keep taking care, and here's hoping 2021 will be a better year for all of us!

Sincerely,

Cassandra Dahnke,

Co-founder

Institute for Civility in Government

**Treasurer: Ann Martin**

In 2019, we ended up roughly \$1,000 positive for the year. As you know, 2020 was a year of unexpected challenges AND unexpected blessings. This year, we covered an unexpected cost increase in our property insurance, replaced a failed air conditioner, and upgraded our sanctuary broadcast system. With our shift to all-virtual worship services, most of our offerings were received by mail - and thank you for your steady support! On the blessing side, we received a Paycheck Protection Loan for \$12,300 and a one-month rebate from the Board of Pensions. Late in December, we received a \$6,087 grant for the Presbytery of New Covenant. These funds will be spent in 2021 and are dedicated to future upgrades to our A/V system. So how did it all settle out? We ended the year \$6,053.23 in the black, thanks to the A/V grant. Without the grant, we would have ended the year <\$33.77> in the red. And that's darn good, all things considered. We couldn't have done it without our faithful members, and the treasurer could not have kept up all of it without the help of our hard-working Finance Committee (Johnny Gaskill, Bob Bartel, and Kaydonna Fox). Onward to 2021!

## Poinsettias that were donated for Christmas

Jo Ann Black in memory of Norval Black

Darlienne Powell in Memory of Bob Hamilton, Winston Powell, Earl Cloherty, and Sarah Cloherty

Sandra Horton in Memory of Hilton Horton, Marva Farvin, Shirley Phillips, Norman Mc Intyre, and June Moore

Kevin Nickels in memory of Margaret and Wilbur "Nick" Nickels and George McLean



**February 7, 2021**

### Congregation Life.

Although we cannot have a social coffee time after church on Sunday, We can pray for each other. **Feb 7, 2021** is Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday and we can drive by with money, check or can goods to help others. Woodforest Church is a very giving church. On **Feb 7** someone will be manning the door from 9-11am to take your donations.

### Keep in Prayer

Krista Bartel who has surgery on her shoulder on Monday Feb. 1st

The Thomas Family who all got Covid over Christmas and lost their Grandfather.

Thanks for Kathleen Watson's sister Ann whose eyesight is improving.

Darlienne Powell who is back in the hospital for tests.

Madeline Butler for peace and comfort having decided to quit chemotherapy

Sandra Horton and thanks that she has now had both doses of the Covid 19 vaccine

Glenda Leggett and Bill Ward who are having health problems

Prayers for Caregivers.

Fred Thompson who lost his wife Linda to whom he was married for 54 years.

Shar Baker for healing from her Double Concussion.

Kimberly, Mike, Brittany, Timmy and Mark Bernard Marty, Julie, and her Dad who have contracted Covid 19

Kristy Alexander

### Last Word Prayer for a Troubled Nation

God of ages, in your sight nations rise and fall.

and pass through times of peril.

Now when our land is troubled, be near to judge and to save.

May leaders be led by your wisdom; may they search your will and see it clearly.

If we have turned from your way, help us to reverse our ways and repent.

Give us your light and truth to guide us;

Through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of this world, and our Savior. From **Presbytery of New Cove-**