

*Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church*  
**PRAYER AND PRAISE TO GOD**  
*during Covid-19*  
**NEWSLETTER**

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**“ABIDING AND ABOUNDING TOGETHER ALONG THE WAY”**

*FROM PASTOR PRAYLOW*

The start of a New Year naturally brings wonder about what lies ahead. As I pray about my pastoral and professional plans, hopes and expectations for 2021, I find myself asking myself, “how” will I approach the experience of living in the New Year. My answer to this important moment of wonder is to continue to abide in the Word of God so that I may continue to abound in the works of God. As I journey alongside each of you as you encounter God and engage the ministries of Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, I’d like to ask you each a similar question: How are you abiding in God and abounding in all areas of your life and Christian journey?

While we are discerning goals and hopes for the New Year, it’s in our human nature to dare to set our plans. While we begin the New Year in response to the invitation to start again, our expectations in the New Year are informed by our experience of living last year. Whatever we have carried over with us into the New Year, it is my hope that will continue to abide in Christ as we are open to new ways of abounding in the works of God.

# PRAYER AND PRAISE TO GOD

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As we enter this New Year, we must be encouraged in reminding ourselves that God in Christ Jesus goes ahead of us in the journey, wherever the journey may lead. We can find encouragement that God will direct our paths as God did in the journey of the wise men. “<sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road,” (Matthew 2:12 NRSV). The wise men trusted God enough that they felt empowered to travel in a different way. Regardless of what 2021 will bring, let us find assurance in the reminder that God is with us and shows us the way.

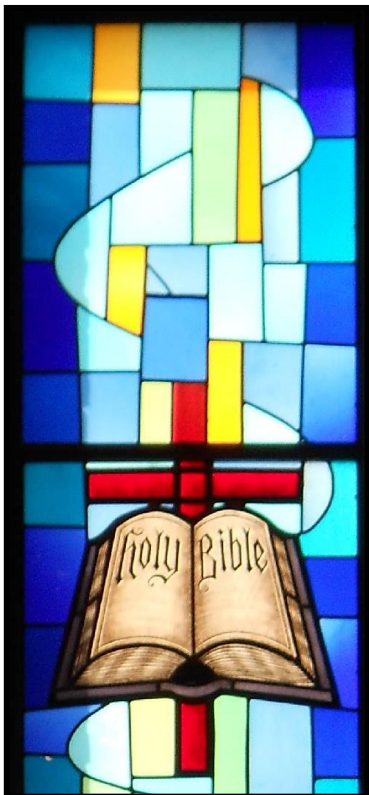
As we journey ahead with expectation that God will show us the way, we can also look to history for models of what “going” another way may yield. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King shows us another way in how we can build community. In advocating racial justice and peaceable relations among all people, Dr. King believed that love should shape how we relate to one another. Dr. King also believed that we are all connected. In his published letter titled, “Letter from A Birmingham Jail,” Dr. King writes, “In a real sense all life is inter-related. All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.”

In the journey and experience of living in 2021, let us continue to abide in the Word of God and abound together remembering that we are all in this together and that whatever affects one of us, affects us all.

Wishing you each a peaceful and blessed New Year!

**Rev. Perzavia T. Praylow, PhD., Pastor**  
*Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church*





## PHILIPPIANS 4 : 4-7 NLT

<sup>4</sup> Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. <sup>6</sup> Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. <sup>7</sup> Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.



## **PRAYER** BY ELDER NAOMI P. DAVENPORT

Gracious God renew us with Your Spirit. Guide us with Your caring love. Inspire us with Your vision for our future.

Help us Lord God to learn from our mistakes. As we move into new arenas of learning and sharing together.

Give us understanding of Your power in our lives. That we may strengthen one another and exercise our ministry more readily and thankfully toward Your creation.

Give us grace, Dear God, to do Your will. In Jesus Christ name. Amen



## **IT'S JUST A THOUGHT** BY ELDER STEPHANIE COX

God provides and has given us all that we need and most of what we want. Therefore, let us make do with the gifts we are given and be thankful to God, our provider.

# JUST A THOUGHT



## TILL WE MEET AGAIN

BY TRUSTEE GERRIE ISABELL MCCOTTRY

**2020** has been a most challenging year. And even that is an understatement. We have faced and are still facing issues relating to the pandemic -- economic, social, emotional, mental, financial, and the list goes on and on -- in addition to the pre-pandemic issues of life.

However, in the face of all this, the loss of a loved one is the hardest to deal with. We lost two great women within two weeks of each other. One brought the other to 15<sup>th</sup> St Presbyterian Church Women's Bible Study. They were friends for decades, long before reuniting at our church; but their friendship grew even more through this very fulfilling spiritual journey.

Ms. Jackie and Ms. Margie were so close. They loved children and loved to talk to each other. They had so much to share. When I told Ms. Jackie that Ms. Margie was not doing well, she said "I can't stand to lose my good friend." Less than two weeks later, Ms. Jackie was called home.

As a very caring church family, we all try to comfort each other. As I was explaining these deaths to my grandchildren, my granddaughter Chloe smiled and offered these comforting words to me, "At least they can talk to each other now."

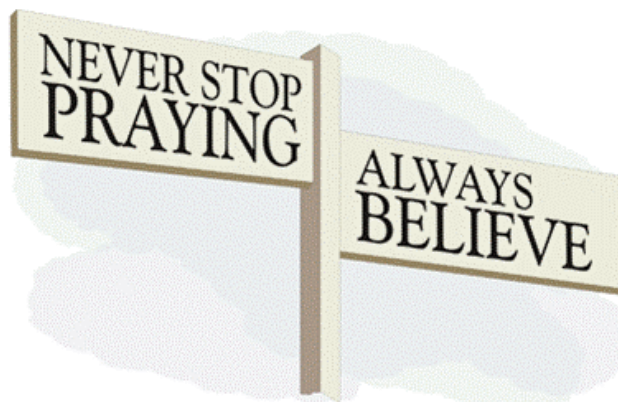
To God Be the Glory!





## **A PRAYER** BY PATRICIA PETTY MORSE

To my friend/family member/loved one. I pray for you daily. You are a living force within so many people. Life sometimes provides hard lessons to show us that every minute, every second is precious and a blessing. Oh, how much time and opportunities for good- and for God- we have wasted. Peace to those who are suffering. There is a balm in Gilead that heals the sin-sick soul. There is a balm called Jesus. Prayers going up for you today and every day. Dear Lord, may the days we are blessed to share with our loved one be spirit-filled days of rejoicing, giving, singing, dancing, praying, sharing, and loving. Lord, I know You love our loved one, your servant. Let her light shine ever so bright among your sheep... and the goats too! Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey this week, knowing he is returning soon to his Father. We all are riding our own donkey, returning to our father, although we don't know when. Let us rejoice in the journey. You are in my prayers.



**2020** BY DEACON PAMELA NELSON

Oh, what a year you've been 2020, need I repeat, pain, suffering, agony, confusion, annihilation, depression, anxiety and the ultimate passing over to the other side, death. As this year comes to an end on December 31, 2020 at the stroke of midnight, my Spiritual being peels away the numerous layers of negativity of your grasp 2020 to see the Glorious light of Spirituality of God's many Blessings. Renewed belief in humankind, remembering the millions that gathered nationally and internationally to decry racism and hate, to collectively honor our Health Care Workers as they tirelessly and unselfishly tend to many during our continuing Covid-19 challenges. The rising of our Human Souls to readjust to a new norm, virtual work, school and Spiritual Worship, increased donation to causes that help to feed and clothe our vulnerable human family. 2020, yes behind your darkness there was and is a continuation of Spiritual Enlightenment and Blessings, the continuation of hope, believe in the essence of our Human soul. I bless you 2020, in spite of it all. Goodbye 2020 and welcome the Glorious Blessings of 2021.

## HAPPY NEW YEAR





## **JACKIE – OUR EARTH ANGEL** BY ELDER VELMA DARDEN COX

You were truly an Earth Angel who walked among us.

You taught us by your exemplary example and unwavering faith in God, Whom we all must trust.

You sang like a nightingale, by far  
Because you were our brightest shining star.

The children you loved so very much—  
When it came to bringing out the best in them,  
You had the golden touch!

We are so deeply saddened to see you go,  
Because we all revered you and loved you so.

It was ok to call you, 24-7.

Now, you are home with the Lord, up in heaven.

Your cheery smile was so genuine and warm.

It sent a message to the world of love and charm.

You personified excellence, peace, and tranquility,  
As well as faith, trust in God, kindness, love, and integrity.

Your life reflected a beacon of bright light—

Oh, how you let it shine, both day and night! -

In order to discern and do what was pleasing in God's sight.

We will miss calling your name. Now that you are no longer with us,  
Planet earth will never be the same.

You had a heart of purest gold. Your amazing legacy of true Christian love, unswerving faith, words of encouragement and doing the work of the Lord, we will continue to uphold.

The story of your exemplary life remains to be told— Especially the profound, positive spiritual effect that you had on each and every soul. Jackie, our Precious Earth Angel,

You worked hard and did your best.

Surely, you have earned your heavenly rest.



## **NEW YEAR PRAYER** BY *JOHNIE SEABERRY*

Thank you, Lord, for waking us up this morning to view another day. We cannot thank You enough. We praise Your name all during the day and night. We know You hear our prayers, and we thank You for answering us every day.

Thank You for giving me a wonderful relationship with the Lord. You gave me marriage, two beautiful children, four beautiful grandchildren, and two wonderful and beautiful great grandchildren. I cannot thank you enough for your blessing me with the children. They are so nice that I cannot help but thank you every day for them.

We cannot thank You enough for Your love, blessings, peace, contentment, joy, happiness but most of all for knowing You are with them in every way and with me heavenly Father every minute of the day. We cannot love You enough nor thank You enough for all You do for us and Your people everywhere, every day, kind heavenly Father. You are the most kind, helpful, and loving Father anyone could ever wish for and have. Thank You again and again for being our most generous heavenly Father. We cannot do without Your generosity, love, help, protection, guidance, and direction everyday kind heavenly Father. You are good, and You protect all of us from any hurt, harm or danger.

Thank You for giving us wisdom and understanding in bringing us on this earth to do Your work. We simply love You. Help us in every way, kind heavenly Father. Never let us go astray from Your holy, righteous, and just will. We cannot thank You enough for Your will. We cannot thank You enough for never letting us wander from Your will and righteous living. Never leave or forsake us, kind heavenly Father, for we are Your children, forever. Guide, help, lead, protect, and forever stand by us kind heavenly Father. Be with us all every day in every way. If we are weak, make us strong. Be our friend always, Father.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we pray. Amen





## **MY LOVING TRIBUTE TO OUR BELOVED MARGIE**

BY DEACON MUMBI FULLER

I give all praise and thanks to God our Father, as we celebrate the wonderful life of our beloved friend and sister-in-Christ, Deacon Marjorie Burke, who He now has called Home to eternal rest with Him. Deacon Marjorie, who we all affectionately called “Margie”, received that Divine Call to which there’s only one answer, **“YES”**. I believe Margie’s “YES” was one filled with spiritual joy and longing, because there was no better place she’d rather have been going than to be in the real presence of our Triune God, in the loving Arms of her Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. This is my personal tribute Margie.

I knew our beloved Margie for only several years, and in that sense, I feel a little “cheated” ... for I could have known her and experienced all her wonderful attributes much longer; but she came to Fifteenth Street during my 15-year absence living in Philadelphia, PA. Upon my return and while trying to reconnect with my beloved Church Family, I was destined to bond with her. Margie was that joyous face one could hardly miss in the Congregation... She was the ever-happy face that lit up with a glowing smile as she gave me a big hug during the “Passing of the Peace”, every Sunday!

Then the moment came for us to be with each other up closer... I became a regular at Elder Benny McCottry’s Sunday Morning Bible Study, of which Margie was a long-time “student”. She never missed a single class (unless “Benny and Gerrie” were “missing” too – which was rare.)

Margie and I always sat across the table from each other. I can still see the encouraging nods and smiles she gave me each time I contributed to our scriptural discussions.

As “classmates” took turns to read the Scriptures, I was increasingly impressed by how smooth Margie’s reading was, how well enunciated, how well her joy in the Word came through in every sentence she read. And she enjoyed reading to us, readily volunteered, and I always enjoyed listening to her. When Elder McCottry very engagingly took us through the book of Daniel, I remember Margie reading to us many times from it over multiple weeks. She articulated so well that for me every word sank in. We often shared how much we enjoyed being in the Sunday Morning Bible Study together, exchanges that warmed both our hearts. When I recently (before COVID) missed the Bible Study for an extended period following travel to family in Kenya and from experiencing physical after-effects of extended bereavement, Margie would reach out to me during the Passing of the Peace and quietly remind me I should resume attendance. This was followed with a beautiful, handwritten message at Christmas telling me how much she enjoyed my presence in class, adding: “whenever you come”. I was greatly touched by this reach-out, nurturing effort to end my “absenteeism” (for lack of a better term!)

Little did I know that all along I had been interacting with a master educator and nurturer. Margie’s highly accomplished life in that role, and more, as told in her Homegoing Memorial Service bulletin, put her in real perspective for me. I can now see how many of her high points touched me in very positive ways.



In her loving tribute my other mother, Elder Velma Cox has called Margie: “Our Revered Seasoned Jewel” who “personified grace, class, dignity and sophistication”; was “astute and well-read...” Oh how so true that is!

I can still hear her parting words of spiritual wisdom to us as recorded by her daughter, Tanya Hill from a chat both of them shared around her 96<sup>th</sup> Birthday in August this year. Tanya asked Margie: In difficult times, mom, what would you advise young people who are struggling with adversity... like right now with the Pandemic, and so much sadness? In a feeble but audible voice, Margie replied: “I would say to them not to worry; give it all to God; He will take care of it.” Spoken like a lady immersed in God’s Word; the Holy Spirit of God in her could be “heard” in those few words.

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints (Psalm 116: 15) Our Revered Seasoned Jewell, Margie, now joins other saints from our Church Family who were called Home to Jesus before her. We praise and thank our Heavenly Father for the Blessing of knowing Deacon Marjorie Burke, sharing in a life so well lived in the service of our Lord. Margie, we enter the New Year 2021 missing you deeply, but remain comforted in the knowledge that you are now in eternal rest in the loving Arms of our Lord Jesus. **To God be the Glory.**



## **LOVE, THE GREATEST GIFT** BY DR. RONALD RAGLAND

God's love for you and for me is born!  
Our Emmanuel is God's Love availed to All.  
The Christ Child enters a world then as now, torn.  
Princes and principalities were at odds after Adamic fall.

Joseph & Mary had taken flight . . .  
To find a place to birth The Son - in Bethlehem.  
Theirs was faith informed by God's Omnipotent Might.  
Then as now, safety was humanly unclear for each of them.

Faith was their substance and their Rock.  
Faith-informed, The Holy Son was birthed a way; in a manger.  
Faith-energized, His parents knew they competed with timeline,  
the ticking clock.  
Faith, fully realized, Jesus' parents birthed The Babe among lowing  
cattle- free of danger.

God's Word, His promise, was and is fulfilled.  
The innocent Babe, born to Mary is The True Messiah.  
Upon His birth, none fully knew that it was forgiveness He tilled.  
Accolades are due Jesus! His love is expansive; His birth places sin  
upon the pyre.







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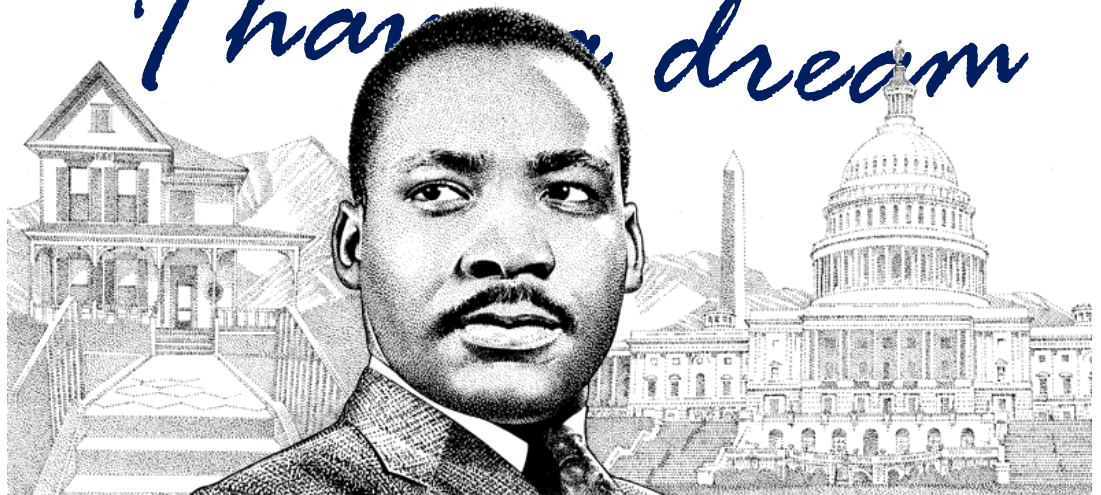
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## GLORIFY GOD BY DEACON JANET LEONARD

First giving Honor and Glory to God, who is the Lord of my life, we have come this far by faith. We glorify God by trusting Him in faith. This new year we are stronger and courageous because God kept reminding us that He was with us. God's grace and mercy kept us through the dangers and snares. We rejoice as we serve the Lord with gladness. Evil is ever present, but God promises to make a way of escape. His sovereignty, omniscience, and power still reign! God alone, deserves to be praised, honored, and worshiped. So, in all things God must be praised and glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever and ever. Amen. Amen. Amen.

*I have a dream*



CELEBRATING **MLKJ** DAY