

THE VOICE

May 2, 2017

RAGS

BY ROY JAMES

As a dog, it didn't look like much. Even though it was a puppy, it wasn't the cute cuddly kind that you want to snuggle up next to, and kiss on top of its head. But I immediately loved him. He had to come home with me.

Rebekah, my daughter, wanted a puppy. Rebekah and Merryl believed a chocolate lab was the best dog ever. I set about finding a chocolate Labrador puppy. A friend of a friend gave me a phone number, and I set up the meeting.

I don't remember why Rebekah and Merryl were not with me. The puppies were scrambling in the back of a pickup truck. They were cute and yelping. The puppies stumbled over each other as they tried to get my attention for a pat. The scroungy-est, mangiest pup I've ever seen huddled in a corner. He just didn't seem to feel good.

As a dog, he didn't look like much. I've been with people who have bought dogs before. I've watched them check out every inch of the dog stem to stern and pass over a dog that looked pretty good because they saw some twist or turn in a dog's structure that just didn't feel right. I've watched them turn away at the slightest sign of a coat being imperfect or a hair not laying straight. I've watched them check the lineage for page upon page before accepting a dog from the breeder.

As a dog, this one didn't look like much. The pup was peeking out from his corner like there was nothing in the world for him to see, and he wasn't sure he wanted the world to see him either. I've seen mange on a dog before, and I knew this one was a victim of its itch and misery. The people with the other dogs didn't want me seeing him. They kept holding out perfect specimens for me to hold and cuddle.

As a dog, Hershey didn't look like much. I reached down and picked him up. I couldn't remember whether mange was transferable to humans. I only knew that love was transferable, and he needed that right then. When Hershey knew I wasn't going to push him away, his tail began wagging, and his eyes peered up into mine. That was when it happened. Hershey began to become the dog of my dreams. It didn't have to do with perfection. It had to do with love.

As a dog, Hershey may not have looked like much. But in just a short while with grace, and play, and nutrition, and vet bills, Hershey became fully what he could be. With or without his sleek coat he was my friend and my companion. Not because he looked like a champion, but because we shared love.

I think God often finds me in the corner with my mange showing. I may not look like much, but God knows my name, draws me to himself, and soon I am able to be what I can become. *"Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you."*—Romans 12:2



The Newsletter of First United Methodist Church of Longview
(903) 753-4463 | longviewfumc.org
400 N. Fredonia Street, Longview, Texas 75601

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK
[Click Here](#)

VISIT US ONLINE
[Click Here](#)

Church News

LIVING THE RESURRECTION, WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

"Living the Resurrection" by Eugene Peterson facilitated by Roy James and Steve Jones from 6:15–7:15 p.m., Wednesdays, April 19–May 10 in the Heritage Room

Christ's friends were utterly transformed by His resurrection. Their friendship, their work, and even their meals together took on a new meaning and purpose. The same can happen to us today.

Eugene Peterson, beloved pastor, scholar, and translator of *The Message*, takes you back to Jesus' time so you can experience the Resurrection through the eyes of biblical witnesses. You'll be a participant in the story, so its meaning and wonder can enliven your soul as never before.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT COMMUNION

Wednesdays from 6–6:15 p.m. in the Heritage Room

Two thousand years ago Jesus ate with sinners and those whom others scorned. He still does. None of us is worthy, except by God's grace. Thank God we don't have to earn worth in God's eyes by our goodness or our faith. Your sacred worth, and ours, is God's free gift. No matter what you have done or what your present condition, if you want Christ in your life you are welcome at his table. Communion provides the opportunity for you to confess your sins, to receive forgiveness, and to indicate your intention to lead a new life.

WOMEN, LADIES & GIRLS

Have you been on a Walk to Emmaus? Come join with us, our newly established Reunion Group

This is a time of bi-weekly reflection of our daily lives. Helping us to remember where we were successful in our faith walk and reminding us of where we could do more on our faith walk. We have established a time and place for these Reunion meetings. We will meet every second and fourth Thursday of every month, at 5:30 p.m. in the Parlor. You are Welcome anytime you can make it! We can't wait to see you.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER, MAY 3

Chicken and Sausage Jambalaya, Red Beans and Rice, Garden Salad, Assorted Desserts

RSVP by emailing Sarah Mays, Event Director, at smays@longviewfumc.org or call at (903) 753-4463. If you have any food preferences such as gluten free, vegetarian, vegan, or sugar free, please let Sarah know.

Click here to RSVP for
WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER

SUMMER BIBLE STUDIES

JULY 12–AUGUST 9

Mom to Mom

Wednesdays from 4–5 p.m.

In the Heritage Room

"Trusting in Christ (Jesus Calling Bible Studies)"

Wednesday Night Dinner

Wednesdays from 5–6 p.m.

In the Fellowship Hall

Adult Bible Study

Wednesdays from 6–7 p.m.

In the Heritage Room

"Trusting in Christ (Jesus Calling Bible Studies)"

CURRENT STUDIES IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

Spiritual Formation and Bible Study are foundations of our faith. Studying the Word of God together helps to build long lasting relationships with one another as we strengthen our knowledge of God. Below is a list of the current studies in Sunday School at Longview FUMC:

Agape, 24 Hours in Lent

Alpha-Omega, Adult Bible Series

Clyde Hall, Adult Bible Series

Faithlink, Faithlink Online Study

FLIGHT, Cast of Characters

Genesis, The Creed by Adam Hamilton

Grace Lowry, Cast of Characters

Journey, The Apostles Creed

Kaleidoscope, Various Topics

Henry Foster, Adult Bible Series

New Beginnings, Restored

Newnham, Adult Bible Series

Prayer Warriors, Prayer Study

Thelma Morgan, Adult Bible Series

Waddell, John Wesley Study

Give Mary Collier, Associate Pastor, a call at (903) 753-4463 ext. 22 if you have any questions.

BEYOND THE BROKEN HEART GRIEF CLASS

Tuesdays from 4–5 p.m., May 9–June 6, in the Heritage Room

We grieve because we love. How does the heart understand grief when it is broken by the death of a loved one? To survive and live forward, those who grieve must find answers. As we grieve, slowly we understand that grief is not a crisis of faith—it is a crisis of the heart. Here you will find comfort, guidance, and spiritual support on your journey through grief. The hope is that these resources will lead you toward renewed hope and fullness of life as you emerge at last from the darkness of grief into the light of new life, your soul restored through the steadfast love and faithfulness of God. Please register in the church office. For more information, please contact Mary Collier at (903) 753-4463.

UMW TO HOST GRADUATION SHOWER FOR TWINS IN FOSTER CARE

The United Methodist Women will be hosting a graduation shower from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Sunday, May 21, in the Cook Foyer in honor of Ladarius and Ladarian, twin foster care seniors who plan to attend college in the fall. Both are heading to Tyler Junior College and majoring in nursing. Please join us as we congratulate these hard-working young men on a job well done and help provide items they will need as they begin to live on their own in college.

Both are registered at Target under College Registry: “Ladarius UMW” <http://www.target.com/gift-registry/giftgiver?registryId=9f0338fe55d74734afd52f18bc8fdade>

“Ladarian UMW” <http://www.target.com/gift-registry/giftgiver?registryId=e2450c4c27b4402c9e1838cd619b9eac#1>

Gift cards to Best Buy, Walmart, etc., are also welcome. Gifts may be brought to the shower or delivered to the church office. Shopping assistance is also available. Checks may be made out to “UMW” and delivered to the church office. UMW members will purchase and wrap gifts and include a card for you.

For more information, please contact Patty McLeroy at (903) 452-4307.

LIBRARY BOOK SALE

The church library book sale will be Saturday, September 9, and Sunday, September 10. If you would like to donate books (any except encyclopedias), DVDs, or CDs for the sale, please take them to the church library workroom (located near the church office) at any time. We are already sorting and pricing books for the sale.

“LAITY LISTENING SESSIONS”

Four informal meetings with District Superintendent Chuck Huffman and the members of our local churches have been set up to offer open discussion on any topic, sharing of thoughts and ideas, questions or concerns. Rev. Huffman will lead the conversation and answer your questions. Everyone is invited to attend these meetings. The meetings will be held in each of the four quadrants of the district. The meetings will begin at 6 p.m. on the following dates and locations in our district. We hope you will make plans to attend.

May 15—Marshall First UMC
May 18—Hardy Memorial UMC

May 16—Pittsburg First UMC
May 22—Greggton UMC



IT'S SFLC FAMILY CARNIVAL TIME....COME ONE, COME ALL ON SATURDAY, MAY 6!

School for Little Children's annual Spring Family Carnival is on Saturday, May 6, from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. in the FUMC Faith Center. Bring your family and friends for a day filled with fun! There will be two bouncy/obstacle courses, games, the ever-popular cupcake walk, and delicious food. Our Silent Auction will be held in the Heritage Room. It will include projects made by the children as well as beautiful themed baskets donated by each class, and many other special items.

Wristbands can be purchased on the day of the Carnival for \$15. Come have fun and support School for Little Children! For additional information, please call the School Office at (903) 753-3121. This is School for Little Children's major fundraiser for the year. Your support is appreciated!

LIMITED OPENINGS ARE STILL AVAILABLE

SFLC has limited openings available for Summer, as well as, Fall 2017–Spring 2018.

Please call the School Office at (903) 753-3121, or email Dallas Lemmon at dallas@longviewsflc.org if you have any questions.

Children and Youth News

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER RECRUITMENT

"Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray"
Proverbs 22:6

The Children's Ministry Council has been actively planning for next school year. One exciting change is a new children's Sunday School curriculum. It's called Activate Faith by Spark House. We will have a really great new curriculum with new ideas and new lessons- so what's missing you ask? Teachers!

We are in need of 24 Sunday School teachers for the 2017-2018 school year. We are looking for adults of all ages and generations to teach our youngest members of this church from ages 4 through 3rd grade on Sundays from September-May from 10-10:40. As a Sunday School teacher, you will be asked to teach only once a month so that you may also continue to be enriched by your own Sunday School class. I'm going to say that one more time....we are only asking you to teach one Sunday per month! Piece of cake right?! And, you will have a teaching buddy in the room with you!

Most of our current Sunday School teachers are parents of the children and they absolutely play an important role in teaching. However, as a member of this church we are also a part of a bigger church family. Just as in our personal families, every member of a family plays an important role so that the family can grow and strengthen together. We'd like to ask YOU to prayerfully consider YOUR role in our church family. It is an invaluable experience in life to have friends of all ages and those connections can be made through Sunday School teachers. Remember that experience is not required- we really are trying to reach out to new people. Maybe you've never taught anything before, maybe you are a retired teacher, maybe you were an active Sunday school teacher here ten years ago, maybe you have grandchildren in this church, maybe your own kids are in college or older. I could name a scenario that fits everyone in this room. YOU are who we are trying to reach!

You will notice goal charts throughout the church so you can visually see our recruitment success, as we make our way to recruiting 24 teachers. Please visit our table located in the welcome center for a sample Sunday School lesson and teacher materials for our new curriculum, Activate Faith. We will also be available to answer any questions that you may have about teaching.

We ask that you prayerfully consider enriching our youngest church family members by teaching Sunday School. I believe Proverbs 27:17 says it best, As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. If you are ready to say yes to the kids of FUMC, please call or email Pastor Nathan. You will continue to hear from us in different ways over the next couple of weeks as we continue our teacher recruitment campaign, so if you need to think about it, you have time.

As a beacon of hope to all, we believe our church is committed to sharing the light of Christ with each generation. We ask that you please pray for children's ministry and future Sunday School teachers!

For more information, or to sign up, contact Pastor Nathan by phone at (903) 753-4463 or email at nfirmin@longviewfumc.org.

SUMMER SLAM!

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

SummerSlam!, June 18-21, is a district wide pre-teen mission open to kids entering the 4th-6th grade in the fall. They will overnight at Longview FUMC and spend the days in mission projects around town. Registration is open now at <https://goo.gl/forms/xljO7dXa0mt7q1Rz1>. Because it is a multi-church event, registration must be completed through this website if your child is planning to attend SummerSlam!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, REGISTER TODAY!

VBS will be June 26-30 from 9-11:30 a.m. VBS is open to all children ages 4 years as of September 1, 2016 through those entering 6th grade in the fall of 2017. You can register online now through June 22 at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd5Y_VL9qA8gfe1MAFNNnH0HhMwPKIoEig-q9riSQ0V82k-Mw/viewform?c=0&w=1.

Registration is online only. Please contact Rachel Geist at (903) 753-4463 if you have any problems completing your registration.

MONTHLY YOUTH MISSION FOR MAY

Youth ministry will be helping with SFLC carnival on May 6 from 12-4 p.m. This opportunity will count for a mission madness point and community service hours. Sign up in Youth Room.