

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

A NEW VISION FOR A NEW YEAR



Symeon Shimin, 1902-1984. Contemporary Justice and Child, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, Tennessee.

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness...
Isaiah 11:1-4a NIV

“The ‘shoot’ (*hote*) is a symbol of hope and a clear contrast to the hopelessness of a world filled with the incongruity of loss, despair, hope, wisdom and peace.

Today, the shoot remains a symbol of hope. There seems to always be before us this sacred tension between what is and what could be. Within this holy mystery we discover hope. And yet, hope is just that, a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. Hope is the vision of something radically new. It is the potential in the molecular structure of each thought, idea or dream.

In the Book of Isaiah, we are reminded that God chose to raise up as king the least likely son of an unlikely father. We remember the story. God sent Samuel to Jesse's house to choose the next king from among his sons. After Samuel told Jesse what he had been sent to do, Jesse brought his sons to Samuel, one by one. To Samuel's surprise, God rejected each one that had been brought before him. *But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him.*

The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7

Jesse had one son he had not considered to be a possible choice. He had not asked his youngest son to come to this gathering of potential kings. After Jesse had brought to Samuel his most reasonable and rational choices, and they had been rejected, he called David. David was the least likely and youngest son of Jesse. God chose David to be king. Even so, in this eleventh chapter of the Book of Isaiah, in this vision of God, we do not hear that King David's mighty kingdom will be re-established. David isn't mentioned at all.

The writer of the Book of Isaiah takes us back one generation past the Davidic reign to the simple farmer, Jesse, and says that a shoot (a form of life so modest that it is likely to escape notice) will come out of the stump (an unattractive form that appears to be devoid of life) of Jesse (a man so modest that we hardly know him). It is from these modest beginnings that God proclaims for us the most beautiful vision of life.

What if we believe this fragile sign, *the shoot*, is God's beginning?

Perhaps then we will tend the seedling in our hearts, the place where faith longs to break through the hardness of our disbelief.

What if we chose to live now in the freedom of the promise, in accord with its pictures of God's future kingdom?

God keeps showing us a world of peace where rulers and people care for one another, for the poor and the needy, for the creation and all its creatures.

What if we moved into that world even now, not waiting for the tree to be full grown?

Even though it appears that our world remains compromised and dangerous, and we will have to deal with this in appropriate ways,

God comes to us, here and now, and invites us to move beyond the past, to the here and now...and to a future with hope.

Faith in God empowers us with courage.

We can invite God's future into the present and practice it right now.

The world of nature, though it remains real, can be tempered by a new vision of a creation that sings God praises.

When righteousness prevails, all are fed, and all are loved.

May the Spirit of the Lord rest upon each one of us this new year and may we embrace the love and courage to live God's vision of peace boldly and without compromise.

In Christ's service with you.

Shalom,



Dr. N. C. Wimberly

President's Message

Now that Christmas and New Years are behind us I feel a sense of renewal going into 2020. There is nothing like the start of a new year to encourage people to make plans and set goals. It may be to lose some weight, to set aside more time for reading or even to resolve to be a little more open minded about matters that we may have been steadfast about.

I have always enjoyed the feeling that a new year brings. As a businessman, I used the time between the holidays to start planning how I would approach sales for the new year. As a father, I would contemplate things I could do with my family that would enrich their lives and give them memorable experiences. As a parishioner of Harrisena, I like to think about the things we can do as a church to make our worship experience more meaningful, to enhance the time we spend at Harrisena as a church family and to bring a little more joy in the everyday lives of our members.

Regardless of what most other churches are doing to protect themselves from fading away, Harrisena seems to have a breath of new life. In the past two years, we've had six people join as new members. We've had great fundraisers, and special events. We've seen some great new enhancements to our campus and look forward to even more as the winter turns into spring.

I often think about Rev. Natalie's dream for the curb appeal of our property. Planting a memory garden of perennial flowers along the driveway to the church steps would go a long way towards making the sanctuary a lot more inviting. Trimming the overgrown bushes and trees around the front of the buildings will make for a cleaner appearance, and of course lighting for the parking lot will let motorists know that we are open for business in the evenings. And let's not forget the signage out front. I think it is time to consider some new signage that would fit well into the existing stone framework that is already in place. I would also like to mention the effect of ground lighting to illuminate the front of the sanctuary at night.

I remember in years past that once a year we had a "Levis" Sunday where everyone wore blue jeans and after service we would take care of the simple things that needed some attention throughout the campus. I'd like to see that happen again.

I'm challenging everyone to start thinking about things you feel are important to our congregation and our campus. It does not matter whether they are physical changes or changes in the way we think about service to others. Let's dare to start thinking about ideas that will help us build upon what we have.

I look forward to working with all of you in 2020.

All the Very Best to you and Harrisena,

Peter Pepe

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Submitted by Melissa Ferrie-Healy

Help Wanted!

Our annual **Blood Drive** will take place **Friday January 17th at 12:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. in Robnson Hall**. Our primary concern is collecting as much blood as we possibly can during this brief time. Our coordinators have set a goal of 30 units. **WE CAN DO THIS** (and so much more!) **WITH YOUR HELP!** How is God calling YOU to help?

Spread the word! Hang a poster! Pray for donors and volunteers! Help with set-up or clean-up! Be a greeter! Bake some goodies or make a pot or crock of soup for the canteen! OR, if you're feeling especially generous (and able) **DONATE BLOOD!** Walk-in's are certainly welcome, but you can easily schedule an appointment by calling 1-800-RED-CROSS or visiting redcrossblood.org and entering the sponsor code: *HarrisenaCommunityChurch*.

Any and all help would be greatly appreciated!

How is Your Personal List of Prayer Concerns?

Just checking in on last month's challenge to create a *personal* list of prayer concerns for yourself, your family, your friends, your community, your world – whatever is tugging at your heart – as the New Year (and decade!) dawns. If you've been at it since last month, we'd love to hear how you're making out! If you haven't tried it yet, now's a great time to give it a go!

As always, we would be happy to include your concerns on our Harrisena list, if you feel the need: home/hospital, hospice, home, long term, military or unspoken. Just fill out a prayer concerns request, or contact an Outreach Committee member, our pastor, or the church office.

Thanks to our helping hands!

Many thanks to all who have donated cards and stamps for the outreach program. Thanks also to **Shirley Harney** for helping write Christmas cards to all on our list!

We welcome and encourage your feedback!

2019-20 Outreach Committee Members: Melissa Ferrie-Healy, Scott Fraser (on leave) & Peggy McArthur. Many hands make light work - we could use another few members! Please let us know if you'd be interested in joining us or assisting in any way.



FELLOWSHIP

SAVE THE DATE: January 26, 2020!

POTLUCK LUNCH AND SLEDDING PARTY

Immediately following our regular church service: Hot dogs and desserts will be provided.

**BRING THE FAMILY AND INVITE A FRIEND!
EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

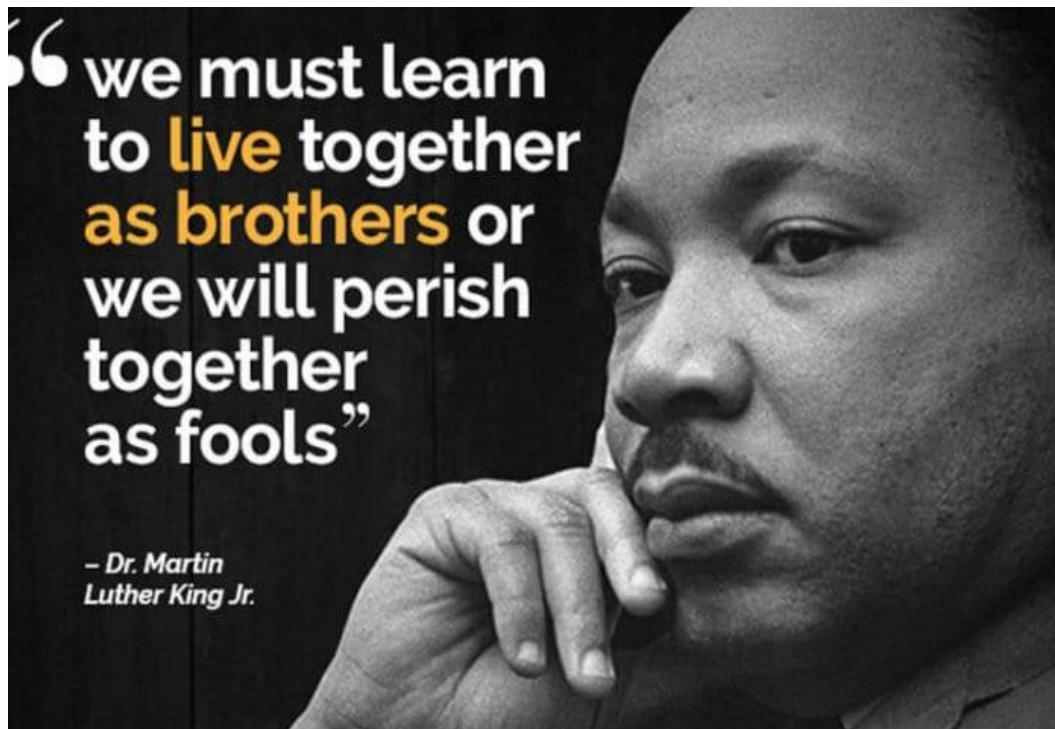


Upcoming Community Event

Mark your calendars for “***On the 11th Day of Christmas -A Holiday Community Sing,***” a special celebration of music of the season which will be held on **Saturday, January 4, 2020**, Hebron United Presbyterian Church West, in West Hebron. **Singing begins at 1 PM in the Sanctuary**, with a brief history and origin of each carol to be sung. **Guest performance by an eleven-member handbell choir** from Greenwich, Easton, Cambridge and Liberty. This is a free event, with light refreshments to be served after the event.

January 19, 2020: The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration will be held at Christ United Methodist Church at 4:00 PM. Join us for the annual walk from City Hall at 3:15 PM to Christ UMC. All are welcome! Refreshments served.



January 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 <i>New Year's Day</i> AA @7:30	2	3	4
5 Epiphany of the Lord Sunday Communion @9:30 am	6	7	8 Conversations @7 AA @7:30	9 Conversations@9:30; Women's Mtg @noon	10	11
12 Worship @9:30	13	14 COUNCIL @7	15 Conversations @7 AA @7:30	16 Conversations @9:30	17 BLOOD DRIVE - <u>12:30-5:30</u>	18
19 Worship @9:30	20	21	22 Conversations @7 AA @7:30	23 Conversations@9:30	24	25
26 Worship @9:30	27	28	29 Conversations @7 AA @7:30	30 Conversations@9:30	31	

January Birthdays:

5) Debbie Cartier; 9) Roy Urrico; 12) James Harney, Jay Petrequin; 14) Donna Gelder-Bigelow; 15) Danielle Nadig-Cooper, Sandy Jabaut; 17) Kyle Irving; 18) William Brown, Richard Kline, Dan Donovan; 19) Cameron Brown, Matthew Healy; 21) Andrea Nadig-Wilson; 22) Ajani Wimbley; 24) Shelley Durkee; 27) Rev. Dr. Wimberly.



Long-Term Prayer Requests – January 2020

Please remember the following members and friends who need our prayers of love and encouragement.

In Facilities

Nancy Cathers – Assisted Living, MD
Jane Christensen – Champlain Valley Senior Living, Willsboro, NY
Grace Clough – Seacoast Nursing Center, MA
Colin Fuller – The Pines Rehabilitation
Scott Fraser – Washington Center, Argyle
Theodore Gusek – Home of the Good Shepherd, Saratoga
Jane Lis – Eastern Star Campus, Oriskany
Lillian McDonnell – Glens Falls Center
Richard Meyer – Fort Hudson
Brett Segedi – Sunnyview Rehab. Center, Schenectady
Geoffrey Stewart – Westchester Trauma Center

At Home

Maria Berg – Mother of Nicole Robinson
Celine & Bob Boulé – Daughter/Son-in-law of Brandy & Wally Madon
Lee Ann Clark – Daughter of Murial Clark
Jill Coleman – Friend of Suzanne Cartier
Kathleen Dumont – Niece of Brandy Madon
Rev. Patti Girard – Friend of Harrisena
Jane Henshaw – Friend of Joanne Beck
Nancy Hoover – Member of Harrisena
Randy Huber – Husband of Cindy Huber
Fabiola Jabaut – Mother of Steve Jabaut
Douglas Jones – Son-in-law of Art Norton
Thomas Kerschner – Relative of Allan Ferrie
Teagan Klingenburg – Student of Melissa Ferrie-Healy
Carmen LeFebvre – Friend of Peg McArthur
Wendy Leyonmark – Sister of Cindy Huber
McCane Family – Relatives of Bob & Phyllis Straut
Philip Nadig – Member of Harrisena
Christopher Nobile – Son of Jim & Eleanor Nobile
Diane Parry – Cousin of Griffith Parry
Richard Smith – Member, husband of Donna D. Smith
Sharon Sturdevant – Daughter of Marilyn Somerville
Melanie Swinton – Friend of Sue Ogden

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*Our Heartfelt Condolences go out to the Family & Friends of **Gertrude Resse** who died this past month. Gertrude was the mother of William Resse.*

Members and Friends in the Military

Andrew Bigelow (*Army*), son of Karen Bigelow—serving stateside

Derek Dumas—stateside

Michael Gusek (*Patriot Missile Battery*), son of Kathleen & Tim Gusek – serving in Middle East

Gary Hogan (*USAF*)

Walter Howard (*USMC*) – serving on the Japan seas

Joseph Hubbard (*Army*) – stateside

Wes McQueen, nephew of Dodi/Rev. Robinson- serving stateside

Tony Mitchell (*USAF*) - serving in Afghanistan.

Tyler Monroe (*USAF*), son of Cheryl Pagano – serving at Sheppard AFB

Griffith Parry (*West Point Military Academy*), relative of Griffith Parry - stateside

James Pearson (*USAF*)

Phillip Riccio (*Army*), son of Phyllis Riccio -serving in Germany

Kelly Thompson (*US Health Svc*)

Daniel Urband (*USAF*), grandson of Alice Urband—serving stateside

Mark Wilson (*Army Spcl Forces/Reserves*), husband of Andrea—serving stateside

Please update the status of anyone you know on this list as soon as information is available.

