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May/June Upper Room

Devotionals are available outside the keypad door.



A Mom Who Could Never Turn Her Back on Kids in Need

Lila entered this world with two strikes against her, one of several siblings born into grinding poverty in a large, multigenerational household.

Her real name isn't Lila. I wouldn't use her real name even if I could recall it for certain so many years after my mom told me stories of the smart, often scared, always precious children whom she had served as a reading tutor.

Lila was a second- or third-grade student from the poor side of Tiptonville, a town in Lake County, one of the smallest, poorest and least literate of Tennessee's 95 counties.

It would be a stretch to say my hometown had ever been affluent, even back in my youth when our farming community thrived. Back then, you could purchase a business suit and dress shoes (men's or women's), a new car, a major appliance of any kind, the full range of farm implements and a movie ticket at a theater box office. None of that is true today.

A state penitentiary has supplanted agriculture and Reelfoot Lake tourism as the dominant employer. Locally owned stores, shops and offices that once teemed with customers now sit mostly darkened and vacant. Farm labor families who sustained them decamped for opportunity elsewhere, and big-box national chains in neighboring towns bled small merchants dry with prices they couldn't match.

Opportunity there became elusive, even for the sons and daughters of families in which reading was treasured, taught and practiced.

What Lila and other children in Lake County had in their favor is a public school system blessed with educators who care deeply and stretch scarce resources to give every one of them the best possible chance of success.

That's where Emily Peacock Lewis came in.

After her husband of 53 years passed away in 2004, she decided, at age 75, to enlist her God-given talents in the county's war on illiteracy. With her own sons long grown, her mother's heart couldn't sit idle while small children needed her help.

She was a voracious reader. She devoured books, short stories, magazines, newspapers, letters, email – even, in her later years, Facebook. That love of reading doubtless figured into her being the salutatorian of her 1946 high school class.

College wasn't in the cards for her, but she served as a regular substitute teacher back in the 1960s and '70s. Her sweet spot was reading instruction.

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In Person:

Living in the Power of the Resurrection

We will continue to offer worship on Sundays.

Worship in May will be 10am online and 10:30 in the Sanctuary!

We would love to have you join us for worship each Sunday!

Continues from front page...

So when she volunteered to help children with remedial reading needs in the first three grades, Lake County school officials jumped at it. Early interdiction is essential for at-risk children. Studies show that through third grade children are learning to read, but after that they're reading to learn.

Mom not only had the experience, she also had the courage to take on such a heart-rending task and the Quixotic level of persistence the work demands.

"Some of these children come from houses where nobody ever read to them. The only book in the house might be a phone book," she once told me. "But they're so smart and they're so sweet and all they need is a chance."

She gave them that chance.

One by one, year after year, she taught them to sound out vowels and consonants to form words, to string words together into a sentence. One sentence after another after another until speed and comprehension increased and she got the only reward she sought: that instant when a child realizes that he or she can read, and that dreams unimaginable for generations are now achievable. She watched them progress through school, earn their diplomas and, for some, head to college.

Though it impressed me, none of it surprised me. Mom had taught it the same way decades earlier to my brother and me around our kitchen before putting us to bed.

It was integral to her identity as a proud daughter of Lake County, as a lifelong believer and Methodist, and as a mom.

In February, at age 92, the Lord whispered to her, "well done, my good and faithful servant," and she followed Him to heaven.

This month, I mark my first Mother's Day without her. It's difficult. But as I inventory her rich life, lived in the best sense of a loving mother, I take blessed comfort from Christ's own words in Matthew 25:40: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

By Bob Lewis

Readers note: A version of this story was published on Feb. 22 in The Virginia Mercury.



Sunday School Offerings

Sundays: 8:30 am Contemporary Christian Sunday School



Thursdays: 11:00 am Prayer & Praise Service

As more and more people are being vaccinated and we ease back into live worship in the sanctuary, we are looking at ramping up small groups for the summer and fall. Be on the lookout for a survey to come your way so you can give input on small group studies or topics you'd like to participate in as well as the format you prefer - live or via zoom. I look forward to helping put these small group studies together for River Roaders!

Desda White, Interim Director of Congregational Life

May Birthdays

May 1

Jane Gresham
Jane Boaz
Tom York

May 4

Charles Messer

May 5

Grayson Clarke
Caroline Davis
Anthony Franklin

May 6

Teddie Lawrence
Addie Kemp

May 7

John Simmers
Charles Messer
Griffin Gayne

May 8

Ansel Eastman

May 9

Carter Hayes
Will Conner

May 10

Virginia Patterson

May 13

Olivia Moun

May 14

Stephanie Jeffrey

May 15

Pres Purdum
Gene Lyon
Ernie Weston

May 16

Missy Markey

May 18

Jim Banta

May 19

Phil Brennan
Noah Benson

May 22

Nancy Kuehl
Ethan Benson
Finnegan Buchholz

May 23

Leo Dunn

May 24

Bess Traylor

May 25

Dot Patrick
Joan Brennan
Stephanie Reed-Wriston

May 26

Laura Talley

May 29

Trenton Bone
Perkins Smith

May 30

Elizabeth Buchholz
Ella Garnett



sunday morning check-in.

11:00 am.

(outdoors and socially-distanced)

sunday night live.

4:30pm.

(live on Youtube @RRUMC Youth)

mid-week check-in.

(individual reach outs during the week)



follow us on social media.



@riverroadyouthumc



@RRUMC Youth



youth@riverroadumc.org

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

WE'RE BACK IN PERSON!

Join us Sunday mornings at 10:30 AM for worship & Outdoor Children's Church. Parents, you have the option to worship as a family or children are welcome to join us outside for Children's Church. Hope to see you soon!

In Toddler & Preschool This Month: Have you ever thought about how many decisions you make in a day? According to some reports, the average adult makes up to 35,000 choices per day. Wow! Some choices are easy—wearing the red shirt or eating the apple instead of the banana. Then, there are the not so easy decisions. What do we do when the decision is hard and we are struggling to know which way to go? We believe the first step to making wise choices is trusting that God's way is perfect. Our prayer is that we can help make many of the 35,000 choices a day our preschoolers will be making one day a whole lot easier. They will know to go God's way, because God's way is perfect!

Our Memory Verse This Month:

Week 1: In The Garden Genesis 1:31, 2:8-3:24

Week 2: Jonah Jonah 1:1-3:10

Week 3: Naaman 2 Kings 5:1-14

Week 4: Josiah (Young King) 2 Chronicles 34

Week 5: Gideon's Army Judges 7:1-8

Our Memory Verse This Month: "GOD'S WAY IS PERFECT." 2 SAMUEL 22:31, NIV

In Elementary This Month: Growing in faith is not something that happens by merely cramming more information about the Bible into a child's brain. All of that knowledge in their head means nothing if we don't help kids experience what that knowledge can do in their hearts. To fully experience faith, we want kids to practice their faith. And that takes commitment. God keeps all His promises and puts His plans into action. Because God has followed through on those plans, we get the chance to be with God forever. We reflect God's commitment to us when we can make a plan and stick to it. This month, we'll help kids discover that one of the best plans they can make is to commit to an ongoing relationship with Jesus. Commit to practicing faith by reading God's Word, praying to Him consistently, talking about Him with friends, and living out that faith every day.

Our Memory Verse This Month: "TRAINING THE BODY HAS SOME VALUE. BUT BEING GODLY HAS VALUE IN EVERY WAY. IT PROMISES HELP FOR THE LIFE YOU ARE NOW LIVING AND THE LIFE TO COME." 1 TIMOTHY 4:8, NIRV

Week 1: Training to Win the Prize

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 (supporting: Matthew 22:36-40)

Week 2: The Wise and Foolish Builders Matthew 7:24-29

Week 3: Model Prayer Luke 11:1-4

Week 4: Peter Says That Jesus Is the Messiah Matthew 16:13-20

Week 5: Widow's Mite Mark 12:41-44



Thank you to everyone who donated baby diapers and baby wipes for the Little Hands VA organization. Your generosity will make a big difference! That drive for Lent ended and the diapers were really appreciated. Thank you so much! The UMW would like to continue collecting diapers and wipes for various other local organizations like the Food Pantry at Ginter Park UMC and Welbourne UMC. Since SNAP (a government supplement) does not provide for diapers we would like to continue helping those in need. Please consider continuing to donate baby diapers and/or wipes and leaving them in the black and yellow box by the keypad door at the church.



United
Methodist
Women

Thank you again for your generosity!

Frances Allen/Alice Weed Circle – May 11

Frances Allen/Alice Weed Circle will meet May 11 at 10 o'clock on Zoom. Hope to see you then! Or hear you if you use the phone!

WOMEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST:

May 13th Virtual Women's Prayer Breakfast: This will be our last time to gather *virtually* before we break for the summer months. Please join us as we share what's going on in our lives along with our prayer concerns. Brew a cup of tea or coffee, grab a breakfast snack and Zoom in for a refreshing time of fellowship with other ladies before getting on with your day. Eva will send out a church wide email with the connection info a few days beforehand.

Thanks be to God, we've been flexible and undaunted by the challenges of the pandemic and have continued to stay connected and meet monthly by Zoom. Hopefully, when we resume in September, we'll be able to meet at a restaurant again, perhaps dining outdoors! Meanwhile, hope to see you *virtually* on the second Thursday in May!

BOOK CLUB:

Book Club continues to meet via Zoom at the same time - 7PM on the fourth Monday of the month. Zoom information will be forwarded to everyone on the Book Club current list a few days before the meeting. If you wish to be included, please phone Ann York, 907-748-0446. Our next meeting will be May 24.

May 24: Better Luck Next Time by Julia Claibourne Johnson

June 28: The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett

CREATION CARE

News from *Creation Care*: Things to be thankful for, to be concerned about or to DO!

First a few things to be thankful for: 1) "U.S., China agree to cooperate on climate crisis with urgency", RTD, 4/19/21, p. A8; 2) "Carbon Pricing Gains Traction....The oil industry's top lobbying group is preparing to endorse setting a price on carbon emissions", WSJ, 3/2/21, p. A6; and 3) "From Trash to Tank...A handful of companies are building facilities to turn household waste into power for planes, trains and trucks....A process known as waste gasification or pyrolysis", WSJ, 2/12/21, p. R9.

And a number of ongoing concerns: 1) Deterioration of the local ecosystem. As Douglas Tallamy spells out so tellingly in his extraordinary *Nature's Best Hope* we can *all* act to have a meaningful impact on creating a more sustainable world by strengthening our local ecosystem with a *diversity* of *native* plants - including, for example, substituting clover for 'sterile', 'feed and water me!'; 2) "End of the Everglades....America's greatest wetland treasure is dying....We need everyone to understand how the clock is running out on America's most extraordinary wetlands", Men's Journal, Sept./Oct. 2020, pp. 64-70; and 3) Here in Virginia, "[t]he overall health of the Chesapeake Bay has stagnated the last two years, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation reported... and...rated the Chesapeake's health a D+", Chesapeake Bay Journal, Jan.-Feb. 2021, p 5.

RISE AGAINST HUNGER

While we, and most other groups, are unable to host our usual meal packing events due to the pandemic, Rise Against Hunger continues to have great need for funds to purchase and ship food to the hungry around the world. To support the organization, we encourage you to participate in Rise's virtual race May 21-23. This is a great way for individuals or families who are runners or walkers to engage in a missions opportunity. Get your family outside to exercise together and support a terrific organization.

Here is the link for information and registration. <https://act.riseagainsthunger.org/event/2021-rise-and-stride/e319306> To double the impact, the Missions Committee will match any funds raised through participation in the race or through a gift to Rise. Just let the Committee know how much you have raised. And post pictures of your race preparation and activity on the app to inspire others! Let's get River Road moving and feed the hungry.

FOOD PANTRIES

We continue to collect food for both Ginter Park and Welborne Food Pantries and deliver to both sites weekly. Much needed items include peanut butter, spaghetti noodles, canned fruit and vegetables, canned soups and beans, canned milk, canned chicken and tuna, ravioli/spaghetti-os, and diapers and wipes. Standard sizes are appreciated for packing purposes.

KITS FOR CONFERENCE HAS RETURNED!!

River Road will be participating in a *Day of Service* on June 19th which is at the end of the annual conference. Be looking for more information regarding the collection of kit items in the coming weeks! Thanks be to God for leading us to love our neighbors. For more missions information, contact Ann Hodges, ahodges@richmond.edu or 804-339-9440.

RACIAL JUSTICE

The Racial Justice Group is collecting art supplies, hygiene items and recreation equipment for incarcerated youth in partnership with Voices of Jubilee, a new worshiping community of hope and liberation, connecting with incarcerated youth in Virginia. God expressly calls us in Matthew 25 to support those in prison. Please click on the link for the Sign Up Genius below and choose items you would like to donate. Items may be dropped off at River Road UMC or mailed via Amazon directly to Jaimey Honea. Alternatively you may call Jaimey, who will pick up the items from you. Jaimey's address and phone number are available at the sign-up link.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805094DA9AD2EA20-bonair>

CREATION CARE - continued

Things we can do include: 1) Composting (i.e. "Food scraps and yard waste make up 30 percent of what we throw away. Composting is one of the biggest ways to have an impact.....Food scraps don't break down in landfills, they take up space and release methane", Parade, 4/11/21, p. 14). We have a simple compost barrel both at RRUMC and here at home); 2) Joining me in person or in parallel by taking time on Earth Day (Thursday, April 22) to clean up a roadside (recyclables *and* trash: an annual family tradition); 3) Taking the few steps necessary to have your homestead certified as a National Wildlife Habitat by providing the four essentials of *food, water, cover* and *places of shelter*; 4) Replacing your noisy, polluting gas mower with an electric one; 5) Speaking up and/or advocating; 6) Reducing the environmental costs of technology (e.g. "The environmental and climate costs are...stunning. But you can minimize your carbon footprint by buying refurbished goods...holding on to them a bit longer, repairing them instead of replacing them...and resell or recycle", NYT, 11/7/19, p. B4; 7) Embracing earth-friendly fashion: "keep the stuff that's already been made in circulation a little longer....Or maybe you could trade your jeans for something else in a local buynothingproject.org group", Parade, *ibid*); 8) Minimize use of single-use and other plastics; 9) Join and support the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and a host of other non-partisan nonprofits working daily to create a more sustainable world (e.g. The Nature Conservancy, Greenpeace, EDF, Ducks Unlimited, Sierra Club, Audobon Society, WWF, etc.); and.10) Buy and heed "Nature's Best Hope" (:) Amen....Respectfully submitted, Michael j Wriston, Chair, Earth Advocacy Committee, RRUMC



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LOVING PEOPLE TO LIFE

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May 2021

**Articles for the
June 2021
Connections are due
May 20, 2021.**



We're on the web at
www.riverroadumc.org



Open Arms Christian Preschool



It's hard to believe that this school year is almost over! Our last day of classes for the 2020-2021 School year will be on Thursday, May 27th. All classes will celebrate with an End of Year Class Picnic. The Pre-K class will also celebrate their Graduation on this day and the ceremony will be shared via our Facebook page (and classroom APP). We have been so very blessed to continue to offer a safe and healthy program for all our families this year! Thank you to everyone for making this year one of our best years yet!

Our Preschool has become very popular and the 2021-2022 School Year all Classes are full! If you have a child (or know a family that has a child) that is interested in our program and being on our waitlist for 2021-2022 (or 2022-2023 school year – we already have students on this list) please have them reach out to Nora Hamlet at 804-754-0227 or email at openarms@riverroadumc.org to get on our waitlist! We are ALSO hiring for Substitute Teachers and Assistant Teachers for the 2021-2022 School Year. Substitute Teachers do not need experience and have very flexible schedules based on needs for filling in in the classrooms! If you, or anyone you know, is interested in being part of this extraordinary Ministry at RRUMC please reach out!



**OPEN ARMS
CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL**

Helping children grow with open hearts, open minds and open arms.