

The Heart Of the Matter



Time

Dear Friends,

There's an old Rolling Stones song that goes through my head occasionally. I don't particularly like it all that much, but when I hear it on the radio or it simply comes to mind for some reason, it will play in my head over and over: "Tiiiiime is my side, Yes it is! Tiiiiime is on my side. Yes it is!"

These words are ironic, because most of us probably don't feel like time is on our side. I can't honestly remember the rest of the words, and I don't know what Mick Jagger actually intended as he belted them out, but time certainly does not appear to be on my side – all I have to do is look in the mirror. I mean, time takes a toll, time wears you down, time causes memories to fade and looks to change, not usually for the better.

But when I think of that song, it makes me think about the ways that time might actually be on our side. Take investing, for example. Put ten dollars in the bank or in the stock market, and it will grow, sometimes slowly, sometimes exponentially, but it will grow, because of the power of compound interest over time. Or take education. Study and learn some area you're interested in and over time you'll become more and more knowledgeable and confident in the field, and eventually become an expert, maybe even make a whole career out of it.

Time can also be on our side in a spiritual sense, when we try and read the Bible daily and pray and intentionally practice the virtues of forgiveness and patience and generosity. Our relationship to God will grow and our Christian character will deepen. Over time.

So I'm not willing to say that time definitely *is* on my side in every way. But I do believe that time *may* be on my side, it *can* be, if we see it that way and put it to work.

Yes it is! Grace and Hope to you as we begin this New Year,

Pastor Duane

UPCOMING Sermons

January 6, 9

"Wait till This Year: The Most Powerful Word in the Bible"

Isaiah 43:1-8;
Matthew 19:26

January 13, 16

"Wait till This Year: What the Markets Will Do This Year" Psalm 36:5-10;
John 2:1-11

January 20, 23

"Wait till This Year: Starting Small, But Starting Today"
Luke 4:14-30

January 27, 30

"Wait Till This Year: Going Somewhere from Nowhere"
Jeremiah 1:4-10



He Chose the Nails

It seems like Advent and Christmas are just over, and yet, we are starting to plan for Lent and Easter. It seems like we just finished the Advent study, "Because of Bethlehem" and we are starting to think about our Lenten study, "He Chose the Nails."

And yet, Christmas and Easter are tightly linked together.

Christmas, the manger, and the incarnation don't make much sense without Easter, the cross, and the empty tomb.

Max Lucado, in the study "Because of Bethlehem" says, "In the manger, God loves us. Through the cross, God saves us." God chose to be one of us (Immanuel – God with Us) - to love us. And God chose the nails. He chose to die on the cross for our sins – to save us.

"He Chose the Nails" will be our Lenten study this year. The study is based on a book by Max Lucado of the same name. It will be a 5-week study. Ash Wednesday this year is Wednesday, March 2, 2022. The study will begin the following Wednesday, March 9, and will continue through Wednesday, April 6.

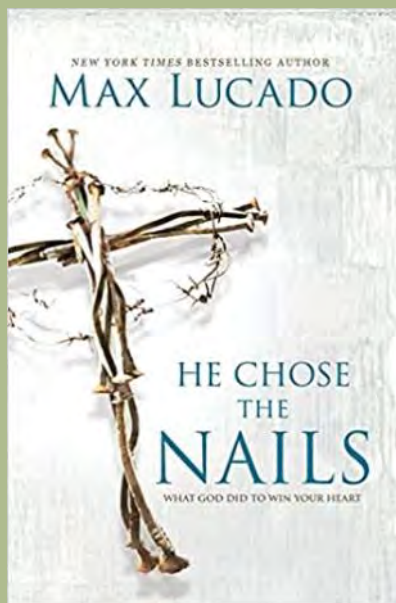
Purchasing a book is not required. But should you want to read Max Lucado's book for yourself during Lent, you can find it here:

[He Chose the Nails: What God Did to Win Your Heart](#) (version published January 17, 2017)

(Note that this is the actual book, NOT the study guide.)

Mark your calendars now. You will be able to sign up during February.

Pastor Doug



Carry each other's burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

Thank you **ALL** so much for being so supportive of our **Faith Promise** ministries. If it wasn't for all your generous donations, of both your time and money, throughout the year, **Faith Promise** would not be able to touch so many who need so much. Just a few ministries **Faith Promise** support are:

Ronald McDonald House
Interfaith Hospitality (IHN)
Perry Township Religious
Education (PTREA)
Feed A Need (F.A.N.)
One Mission Society (OMS)

We cannot thank you enough for your support and hope you consider supporting **Faith Promise** this year as well!



Facebook is a great way to follow everything happening at SUMC! Make sure to Like and Follow!



Subscribe to SUMC on YouTube to keep up with all of our online services and special videos!

Jubilee Christmas Gratitude

Another year of adjusting to how a pandemic can affect the ministry of Jubilee, every roadblock, frustration and major or slight change can lead us to joy and delight. Eighteen families, English speaking, Burmese and Hispanic, and over 60 children have had the opportunity to experience God's love through your generosity and care.

At the end of Jubilee Day, December 11, parents or guardians wrapped toys and gifts with their hosts and many willing additional hands. Some families picked up their gifts to wrap at home and some of our church hosts delivered the gifts when transportation was an issue.

Families received blankets for each of their children, made by several members of our church. Pillows, coats, hats, gloves, and undies were part of a family's Christmas. Parents shared with their host the particular needs of their family and because of your donations to the Jubilee Fund, we could provide so much of what was essential.

Our Cookie Bakers went above and beyond in bringing homemade cookies so that every family took home three or more dozen delicious cookies. A Christmas card from the church family included a generous gift card for any additional food or shopping the families had.

Jubilee planning begins after the first of the year and continues through the months with full steam ahead in September. The wonderful Homecroft staff which includes a social worker and two interpreters, recommends families to be matched with hosts from the church. However this is a whole church effort.

GRATITUDE – To All of You for any effort you made to share with our Jubilee Families: shopping online, shopping in stores, making blankets, donating wrapping supplies, baking cookies, contributing to the Jubilee Fund, assisting on set up day or Jubilee Day.

GRATITUDE – To the Homecroft Staff who recommends families for Jubilee and follows up if there are concerns or special needs.

GRATITUDE – To our Jubilee Hosts who make the connection with a family, invite them to participate, share and gather information, listen for concerns, and provide understanding and comfort.

GRATITUDE – To the Church Staff who juggle, arrange, and provide support to all of us and often on very short notice.

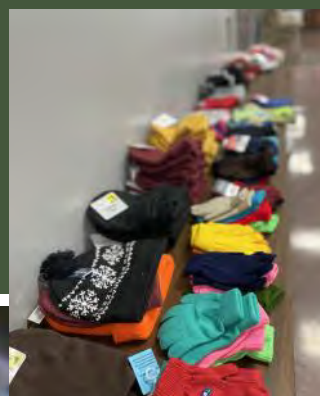
GRATITUDE – To a Jubilee Team of incredible Ladies who work together, step in wherever needed, encourage and lift up each other while sharing God's presence in all circumstances.

JUBILEE CHRISTMAS GRATITUDE! God's Ministry at Southport wrapped in

Grace, Faith, Joy, Peace, Comfort and Love!



Jubilee Team doing preparations for their 2021 families!



Charge Conference

We will be holding a special called Charge Conference on Tuesday, January 11, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., with our District Superintendent Dr. Aleze Fulbright, to discuss and vote on whether to sell 3 parcels of real estate fronting on Worman Street, the proceeds of which will be used to pay down our mortgage principle and/or be added to our church building maintenance fund.

Women's News

Rebekah Circle meets each month on the second Tuesday at 1 p.m. at the church. The next meeting is on January 11, 2022. All are welcome to come join the fun.

In December, the circle enjoyed sharing our Christmas memories and mementos. The circles just donated 40 hygiene bags to Fletcher Place for their Christmas Event.

January UMW is collecting SHOES, SHOES AND MORE SHOES!!! So gather all the unwanted shoes in bags and bring them to the church bin in the coatroom hallway. The money made from this collection will help with the "WHAT IF" campaign. So bring those new or useable shoes to donate. We will be collecting them until February 7, 2022. We need MANY SHOES, so ask your families, neighbors, and co-workers to help collect them.

This collection is a great way to recycle and reuse items. **The Creation Care team** would also appreciate your help with this project.

Help Needed

F.A.N. needs people to help deliver meals to the camp on Wednesdays at 11:30 a.m., help pack meals at 11 a.m. on Wednesdays, or donate food items.

-Glenda Williams

Feed A Need

This ministry has been feeding the homeless downtown and locally for the past year. Thanks for your generous hearts and donations.

We pack 50 meals each month before the second Saturday. We take the meals to the Tear Down the Walls Ministry for delivery to the homeless camps in downtown. In January, we will be packing the meals on January 6th at 1 p.m. at the church. If interested in helping let Glenda at the church know and she will pass your name on. We need buyers and packers and delivery people.

We also pack 5 meals each week for the local homeless camp consisting of 5 members. This is usually done each Wednesday around 11-11:30 and delivered to Longacre Park area in Perry Township. Anyone wanting to deliver the meals and pack the meals can also let Glenda know at church.

**COME
JOIN
US!**

The **SUMC choir** seeks new members! We rehearse at 8:30 am on Sunday mornings and sing for the 9:00 am Traditional Worship service. There are also tentative plans to sing for Palm Sunday and/or Easter this year, with rehearsals on Tuesday 6:30 – 7:45 pm in March. Previous choral experience and the ability to read sheet music are assets, but not requirements. **If you are interested, please contact Music Director Rhonda Collins at rhonda@sumc.org or 317.258.6743.**

Every Classroom at Imagination Station has a nativity scene and the kids love learning about the true meaning of Christmas!



IMAGINATION Station

The preschoolers had such a fun time during their Christmas parties!



Food Pantry

Southport Church supports the Hunger, INC pantry located on 1416 E. Epler Avenue.

Thanks to the money donations in 2021, a \$25 gift card to ALDI's was given to each client in the Perry Township area in

November/December. All clients were so thankful for the gift to make either Thanksgiving or Christmas bountiful. Thank you for your support to the pantry.

Food donations may be made during open hours and other days by placing your items in the drop box on the front porch.

**We will be collecting the following for January
2nd-6th: CRACKERS,
LAUNDRY AND DISH SOAP, DIAPERS AND WIPES.**

The shoppers for the pantry have had a tough time finding saltine crackers, so there is a real need for this item. The soaps can be purchased at the Dollar Tree as well as diapers and wipes. These items are requested most often at the pantry days. The party is open on Tuesday 10-1, Thursday 4-7 and Saturday 10-1. Thank you for your support in money and items.

WHAT IF

I have been the financial officer of SUMC for a little over five years now. When I first started this position, as you can imagine, one of the first things I did was review our financial position. What I saw wasn't all that bad, but certainly there was some work to do. One of the biggest concerns I identified was the amount of debt we had compared to how well we were positioned to pay it back. We had \$1.3 million in debt. Now the debt was structured well, it was (and still is) in a term loan with a reasonable rate. So, that meant it would be paid off by the year 2043. The problem was that it would cost us over \$1.5 million in interest to pay it off this way.

In those five years I have seen our financial health change dramatically. I have seen that \$1.3 million in debt shrink to only \$560,000. With another \$276,000 already pledged. Plus, we have \$45,000 in reserve to ensure we never miss a payment. We have already saved 100s of thousands of dollars in interest and trimmed over a decade off the term of our debt.

In addition to the \$740,000 in debt I've seen eliminated, I have seen our emergency funds double (still need to work on this though), and I have watched our current liquid assets increase to 2.25 times what they were five years ago.

You have done this by giving generously and being good stewards. Furthermore, you have done this while still actively impacting our community through a variety of ministries and missions that share God's hope and grace through your time, talent, and resources. What is it that Pastor Duane says? "This is the most serving church he's ever seen, per capita." Per capita sounds more like something I'd say, but I certainly echo an amazement for the generosity of the people of Southport UMC and their enthusiasm to do good work.

Now is the time that I must tell you, we aren't quite there yet. We still have a bit to go to eliminate our debt by our 175th anniversary. Roughly \$270,000 to go to be more precise.

The expression comes to mind, "it's time to put some skin in the game." But that expression always makes me think of getting blisters on my hands. Every spring I have this problem when I begin to garden. The tools tend to leave my hands raw, often with chunks of skin ripping off. Thankfully my daughter got me a Christmas present this year to help with this problem. Work gloves! I'm usually too hardheaded to wear them but bet I will this year since they are from her. But something I've noticed is that when you put skin in the game by working your hands raw it tends to slow you down in the future. If you wear work gloves it doesn't seem to have this effect. In fact, it often allows you to work faster. So, I propose we don't put skin in the game, but instead each of us put on our work gloves.



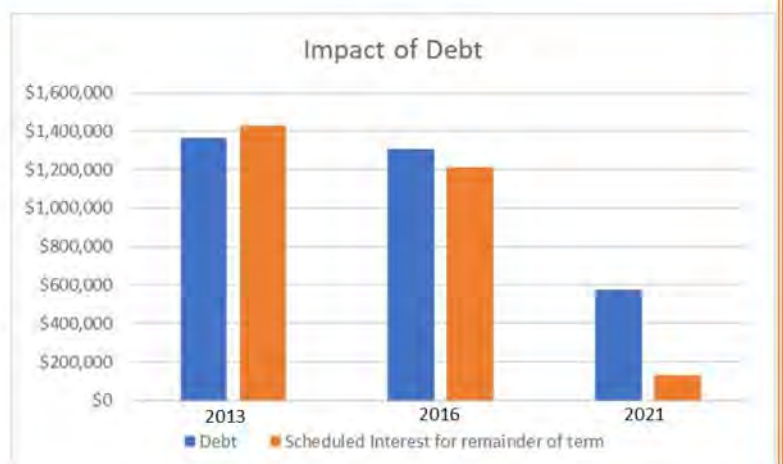
I am thankful for all that you have done to bring us so close to our goal in only eight months. We still have 34 months until our 175th anniversary. What can we do in that time to finish this task in a way that frees us to use our resources to increase our ministry, outreach, and presence in this community?

Join me in putting on our work gloves to eliminate our debt and position ourselves to grow in new and innovative ways and to spread grace and hope for generations to come.

If we never made additional principal payments we would still have a debt of \$1,187,787.91 and we would be "on the hook" for \$936,109 in interest to pay off our mortgage by 2043.

Because of the What If campaign and other principal only payments we currently only have \$578,297 in debt. If we do not pay another penny in additional payments it will only cost us \$131,477 in interest to have our debt paid off by 2029.

We have \$45,000 in the bank & about \$275,000 in pledges to go to principal in the near future.



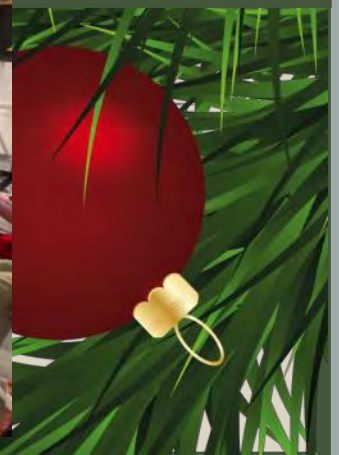


Our Live Nativity went very well. I am so very honored to be working with this group of young people. I just can't help but smile when I look at this picture. I know it isn't easy being on display for 45 minutes, but they did it and were such great sports. Thank you so much Lydia, Sarah, Ava, Lilah, Caden, Corabelle, and Tabytha (from left to right). I'm so proud of you all.



After the nativity we had our Christmas Party full of good food, laughs, and loads of hot cocoa. We worked our way out of an escape room and had a very fun gift exchange.

Our next event will be Winter Jam, it is a concert with several different Christian bands/ artists, January 28. If you are interested, please let me (Kelley@sumc.org) know so we can buy tickets. We would like to get advanced tickets so we can all sit together.



Finance

In the sixth chapter of John's gospel, the story is shared of 5,000 hungry people who were fed by a boy's loaves and fishes. There is a bible commentary in which the author describes this as a miracle, but not in the way we usually think of one. He thought, since people carried food bags with them in those times (much as we might take lunch with us today), there was plenty of food available. The problem was that nobody wanted to share. Perhaps they felt the same way as the disciples—there were too many hungry people to feed, and they thought they didn't have enough. Certainly, it is easy to feel this way about our resources. However, when we all choose to share and work together their will be enough, with leftovers to boot.

This year the people of SUMC have been generous with their loaves and fishes. We provided many people with rent and utility assistance through the Pastor's Benevolent fund. We provided food through the Harvest Table, food drives, and people serving at Hunger Inc. We gave nourishment to the homeless through resources prepared and given through Feed a Need. We financially supported Interfaith Hospitality Network to provide warm beds for people that may otherwise not have them. On a moment's notice, we collected several carloads of diapers, clothes, and other resources for the Afghan refugees. We provided Christmas, including gifts, clothes, and gift cards to 18 families through Jubilee Christmas. And most recently, we gave our entire Christmas Eve offering of over \$3,500 to UMCOR to support relief for the victims of the tornadoes. And these are just a few of the ways your gifts have reached out into the community and the world to bring hope this year.

We did all the above this year and still managed to reduce our debt by over \$280,000 through your generosity to the What If campaign. This will help us bring hope and grace for years to come.

Oh, and there are leftovers. We almost certainly will end the year with a surplus. The surplus will most likely be used for facilities maintenance to minimize the risk of unexpected expenses (example: leaky roofs or broken ACs) in the coming years or put to our debt to help with the What If campaign.

Now, back to the boy and his loaves and fishes. I believe Jesus has the power to feed five thousand with only five loaves and two fishes, but I also believe the act of generosity, combined with Christ's blessing, could have opened thousands of food bags—proving more than enough for everyone. Regardless of which way it happened, it was a miracle.

Either way, the key was the boy. He believed in Jesus and His ability to provide. While everyone cowered and calculated, the boy brought what he had. I can only imagine the wide smile on Jesus' face when he took the boy's lunch. Whether Jesus multiplied it as we think, or whether the gift was a catalyst for more giving, I imagine there were a lot of people who went to bed that night thinking about that boy. A little child, indeed, had led them.

Thank you for bringing what you have. And trusting that Jesus will use it for His purpose. Give it to Christ as a blessing. Then feast on the miracle. This is the gospel we believe, and the gospel we share. Let us continue to be His body in our community and the world.

Church	Nov-21	2021 Year to Date
Income		
Offerings	\$54,360	\$580,750
Other	\$276	\$2,111
Imagination Station "Tithel/offering"	\$3,237	\$33,372
Church Expenses		
Conf. & Dist. Support	(\$5,560)	(\$66,654)
Administration	(\$16,716)	(\$166,122)
Maintenance & Utilities	(\$9,794)	(\$124,534)
Connect, Grow, Serve	(\$22,288)	(\$242,158)
Youth & Child Ministry	(\$1,399)	(\$10,791)
Net	\$2,116	\$5,974
Imagination Station		
Income	\$38,270	\$347,535.53
Expense	(\$28,673.85)	(\$266,392.37)
"Tithel/offering" to Church	(\$3,237)	(\$33,371.93)
Net	\$6,359	\$47,771
All Together		
Total Incomes	\$92,906	\$930,397
Total Expenses	(\$84,431)	(\$876,651)
Net	\$8,475	\$53,745

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Duane Thompson
 Karen Decatur
 Jim Cooney
 Sherry Davis
 Joy Eder
 Suzy Heilman
 Pat Hulfachor
 John Klipsch
 Margaret Trammell
 Connie Whisner



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SERVICE TIMES

Online
 Sunday @ 9:00 a.m.
 Sunday
 9:00 a.m.-Traditional
 10:30 a.m.- Contemporary
 Thursday
 6:30

Everyone is sharing God's love and grace through Jesus Christ in their everyday, 24 x 7 lives.
 So that... we are making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of our community and the world.