



# Colonial Park

UNITED METHODIST

Monthly Newsletter

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## From Pastor Jathaniel

In recent weeks months, you have probably heard in the media about foreigners, refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants. However, I am willing to go out on a limb and say that although you heard about them, you didn't hear about them from a perspective that offered spiritual, Christ centered guidance. You probably heard about them from a political lens which varied based upon the political orientation of who was doing the talking or the particular slant of a particular news business. Unfortunately, what we have learned, perhaps most painfully over the last 24 months, is that if we are not careful, mindful, and intentional we can be disciplined by the news and media outlets a lot easier than by Jesus.

I bring this to our attention for several reasons. Primarily, I offer this as a reminder for each of us as disciples of Jesus that we must remain vigilant to our dedication to the teachings of Jesus. In Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25 he uses this phrase to get to the heart of what he wanted his followers to know and how he wanted them to act: "When I was a stranger, you welcomed me..." In Jesus' context, a stranger was not just a person that you were not familiar with. A stranger was also synonymous with being a foreigner in the land. This teaching was consistent with the law given to the Jews in Leviticus, and it is one that can be directly linked to and summed up by loving your neighbor as yourself.

To follow this teaching of Jesus does not require us to travel around the globe or even outside of our neighborhood. It does require us to look upon foreigners among us with love and compassion—not with fear and disdain. There are organizations in our community that provide us the opportunity to share in this work of welcoming the stranger in our land. You may have heard that Memphis will be receiving about three dozen Afghan refugees, and one of our friends in mission, World Relief (whose offices are located here in the Sea Isle Neighborhood) is working to welcome many of these new neighbors. They offer many, many ways for churches, groups, and individuals to live out their faith by welcoming the stranger and caring for the foreigner living among us.

We also have other opportunities that come right to our proverbial door step. On November 13 & 14, Colonial Park UMC will be a host site for the Guatemalan Mobile Consulate. On this weekend, our congregation will be working with other congregations and groups to welcome the stranger among us, particularly those from Guatemala. The Mobile Consulate is an opportunity for the Guatemalan population living among us to renew visas, passports, and connect with services for their families through their home government. We will be partnering with El Redentor UMC, Indigenous Pastoral Relief, Peace Tree UMC, and many others. This event has previously been hosted by Trinity UMC and Asbury UMC, and I am excited that we have this opportunity to practice hospitality for approximately 1,000 neighbors from Guatemala who will be making appointments to meet with officials from their home country.

There will be opportunities to serve that you will hear about in the days ahead, and if you or someone you know is bilingual (English/Spanish), please know that we would love to get them plugged in. As is the case often times when you practice hospitality, you put your needs and preferences aside to care for the needs of your guests. What this means for us is that our 10:30 service will have a change of venue, and parking might be a little more challenging on Sunday, November 14. But even as you read that, you realize that it really isn't that big of a deal, right? A small price to pay for faithfulness to Jesus. I do hope that you will consider signing up to support this work as the opportunities arise.

I invite you to pray about how you might be consciously living into one of our primary, missional motives of Welcoming the Stranger. Here are a couple of great opportunities that are before you, to do some work with some pretty amazing people to live out your faith in Christ in real life. May the Spirit guide you in all truth and life.

Yours because I am His,

Pastor Jathaniel

# Outreach Ministries

## Your Five Gifts

In this world we live we play to our strengths in most things we do. The problem with this is we specialize or work at things that are comfortable and exclude our other lesser abilities that require more work.

I used to go to the gym and immediately pick up a basketball and start shooting. I really needed to work on my ball handling skills – especially with my left hand. But shooting came naturally and was easier for me. The problem that arose from playing to my strengths was when it was game time my opponents work force me to my left. This ended up hurting my shooting because they could take half of the court away from me by forcing me left. I eventually started to work on the skills that I wasn't as efficient at which made me a more rounded or mature player.

The life that Jesus lays out and that Paul speaks to suggests that spending time in places of weakness is the key to maturing in Christ. Playing within our weaknesses produces something good in us while replacing our places of darkness and brokenness. I Ephesians 4:11-13 Paul writes that each of us has a base gift and that some would be apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists or pastors. Everyone of us has one of these five gifts that we feel more comfortable with and are better suited to. God still leads us to discover and understand the other gifts of ministries.

The base gift is something that we cannot help but do. For a time, we experience the other four gifts and become more rounded for it. Fighting against what doesn't come naturally or is uncomfortable is choosing to remain a spiritual infant. When Paul says, "and become mature" in Ephesians 4:13 he is referring to all the 5 ministries. Maturity comes from having spent time in all the ministries working on our weaknesses and uncomfortable spots. But it is easy to stay comfortable and go back to the way it has always been.

When we grow accustomed to operating in places of weakness, God can use us. As a result, the places we are naturally gifted become places where the Spirit can work through us.

When God knocks accept his invitation and challenge. Use your gifts to become the mature disciple he wants you to become. Let go of what is holding you back from the fullness of God's Kingdom. Go All In.

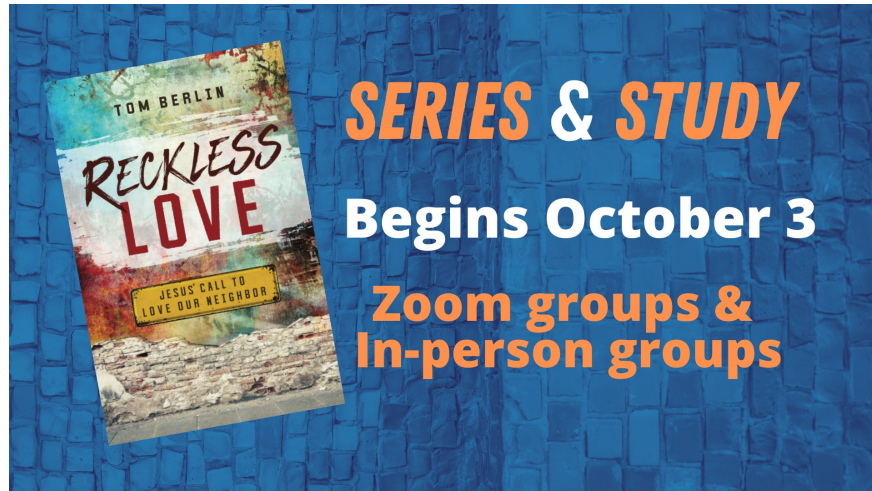
Blessings and Peace,

Gary W. Vaughn

Director of Outreach Ministries



This October, every 10 check-ins at Colonial Park UMC will provide a day of care to a child living in extreme poverty. We're working with Causely and Compassion International to make it happen. You can add #care4kids when you check-in to promote the cause. For more information about this month's charity, check out [www.compassion.com](http://www.compassion.com).



You don't want to miss this!

What is the Greatest Commandment and how exactly did Jesus teach it to his disciples?

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:36-40

*Reckless Love: Jesus' Call to Love our Neighbor* explores and illustrates Jesus' example for us to prioritize loving our neighbor as a way to love and understand God more intimately. Rev. Tom Berlin, pastor at Floris United Methodist Church, wrote this book to challenge each of us to examine this scripture from a different lens – one that examines this command through Jesus' eyes of learning to love our neighbor better.

This is a wonderful next "UP" step on your discipleship journey as it speaks to the character of Jesus and gives us scriptural, tangible examples of how exploring our lives and loving our neighbor leads us into the deep and loving relationship we're striving to have with God.

It's not too late to read and join the discussion!

Books are available. In-person and Zoom book study options will begin the week of October 3 and last for 6 weeks. There is a spot waiting for you.

If you are interested, please reach out to Megan Warren at [mwarren@colonialpark.org](mailto:mwarren@colonialpark.org) or by calling the church office at 683-5286.



Please join us for a reception for Will Colston & Amber Braswell on Sunday, October 3 after the 9:00 am worship service in the Garden Room. Both Will & Amber are resigning here at Colonial Park to pursue new job opportunities.



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Join us Sundays for In-Person Worship at 9:00 am for Traditional Worship & at 10:30 am for Casual Worship. Not ready to be in-person yet? Catch us on Facebook or YouTube at 10:30 am @ Colonial Park UMC. Or you may call the worship service hotline at 901-329-6527 to listen from your phone.

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Scan the QR code with your smartphone to go directly to Easy Tithe. This is an easy way to remain faithful to the ministries of Colonial Park.



This is a newsletter of Colonial Park United Methodist Church. The newsletter is published monthly & mailed third class, and e-mailed weekly except holidays.

Accelerate Update:

Total 3 year pledge: \$623,184.00

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