

### Pastor's Note

"In The Garden" (UMH #314) is one of our favorite hymns, and this week I planted six containers of tomato plants with the hope of a bountiful harvest. As the birthdays of my late stepfather (May 17) and mother (May 22) approach, I am reminded of the planting of a new garden each year. With the planting of a new garden each year, my stepfather anticipated a harvest of tomatoes, potatoes, green beans, green onions, leaf lettuce, radishes, and cabbage for canning and peddling (selling) to our neighbors, friends, and family.

My brother Ike and I would help pick beans, and gravel potatoes, and enjoy the fruits of our labor by helping my stepfather, who was medically disabled tend a beautiful garden each year. We prepared the soil and dug the furrows for planting with the hope of harvesting for canning, freezing, and selling our produce. Some of my fondest memories are of working in the garden with my stepfather, who had a green thumb and always had a beautiful garden. He would start in the autumn getting ready in the winter for the upcoming spring and summer.

We are in the Easter Season still, and I was thinking of the hard work in the garden that provided us with so much family time and time for me to talk to God while rotilling the garden, which blocked out the sounds of the world. "Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy, He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). It is these conversations that opened my heart and mind to hear God's call and understand God's love for us.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). It is the resurrection from the dead in Jesus Christ that explains what it means to experience new life, eternal life, and being with God for eternity. I am fascinated by the commitment the farming communities make and the hope they have in a harvest realizing that if we had the same commitment to God we would experience a harvest like no other, realizing there is hope if we work hard and believe.

Not only did I get my tomatoes planted but my son William planted tomatoes, hot banana peppers, jalapenos, serranos, cajun bell peppers, corn, green beans, zipper peas, squash, and zucchini in his garden. It is great to see the handing down of a love for gardening from my stepfather to me and a new generation. I think it builds community and appreciation for God's Creation that surpasses any Earth Day celebration yet challenges us to pay attention to our planet and be good stewards of what God has given us.

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but [so] that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:17). I am reminded by the hymn In The Garden that "He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own, and the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has known!" I am reminded of the eternal truth and promise of resurrection to eternal life with God begins with the planting in this world in anticipation of Jesus harvesting God's church at the end of the Gospel Day.

O merciful Creator, your hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: Make us always thankful for your loving providence; and grant that we, remembering the account that we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Peace and blessings.

Pastor Tom Mullins

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### CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

#### Wednesday

5:00 p.m. Youth

#### Sunday

8:45 a.m. Lexa Worship

9:40 a.m. Choir Practice

10:00 a.m. Marvell Worship

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

I John 4:16b-21

God Is Love

Marvell Hymns 432, 572

Lexa Hymns 380, 378, 382

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### STEWARDSHIP REPORT

2024 Budget

\$210,585

Needed each week

4,050

Received this week

2,372

Building Fund

500

### ATTENDANCE

Lexa Worship

2

Marvell Sunday School

21

Marvell Worship

52 + 73

### MEMORIAL

**JUDY PADGETT**

Jimmy & Bettie Davison

**Clara Bass is in Marvell this week. Call Betty at 432-940-1021 to see when it's convenient to visit.**