JUST THESE LINES, MY FRIENDS…

... to say that probably one of the most challenging questions that we all struggle with is, “Where is God in the midst of disaster?”

Houston and a growing circle of towns in Texas and Louisiana have been under water due to the devastation of Hurricane Harvey. In India, Pakistan and Bangladesh more than 41 million people have been affected, and 1,200 people have died in the monsoonal floods inundating South Asia, and in Southern California and British Columbia wildfires still rage, devastating lives, communities and forests. The overwhelming images of devastation and suffering that we see bring us to despair. Our faith is rocked by disasters like these, and of course there are no easy answers. How do we believe in a loving God while grieving with so many of our sisters and brothers who have lost loved ones and livelihoods?

In her book, A Paradise Built in Hell, Rebecca Solnit talks about the extraordinary communities that arise in the midst of disaster. Calamity doesn't bring out the worst in us she contends, it brings out the best. Resourcefulness, generosity and joy arise to shine brightly in the midst of all kinds of horrifying situations. Solnit writes, “The joy in disaster comes, when it comes, from an affection that is not private and personal but civic. The love of strangers for each other, of a citizen for his or her city, of belonging to a greater whole, of doing the work that matters.”

That's it, I thought, as I contemplated this current wave of disasters and my own questioning of God's presence. Strangers have become neighbors. Across barriers of class and race and religion people are showing they care. The outpouring of financial support for flood victims in Texas has been phenomenal. Volunteers from Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. are fighting fires in British Columbia, and volunteers from around the world are helping provide aid in Asia.

It always amazes me when people half a world away drop everything to come and risk their lives for someone they don't know and will probably never see again. It is like the parable of the Good Samaritan being lived out in our midst. Heroic rescues, sacrificial acts, generous giving... this is the image of God welling up from within us and shining light in the darkness. This is our loving, caring God reaching out compassionately through the helping hands and aching hearts of all of us who are created in God's image. Why these disasters happened we do not know, but God is there grieving, loving and caring in and through us.

I think that in the midst of disasters like this God calls all of us to be Good Samaritans, to give what we can and do what is possible to help. As you watch the images of these disasters that continue to light up our screens, don’t allow them to overwhelm you. Prayerfully consider how you can be God's compassionate hands reaching out to help.

You can make a difference this Sunday (September 10) by gathering in the courtyard after 9:30 and 11:00 am worship services to assemble health kits. We hope to assemble a thousand of them. You can participate no matter what your age.

This week in worship we have much to celebrate. We continue in our morning Sanctuary services exploring the life of David by examining David’s on-again-off-again relationship with King Saul from I Samuel 18:5-16.

I'll see you on Sunday in our come just-as-you-are community. No one is perfect, but everyone is welcome.

So grateful to be one of your pastors,

Dr. Charles (Chuck) W. Wilson II
Chuck@MatthewsUMC.org

Let’s worship together! Sunday mornings at 8:15 (Classic), 9:30 (Contemporary), 11:00 (Traditional), 11:00 (801South), 12:30 Centro Cristiano Hosanna (Servicio en Español), 9:30 (The Deep Family Worship - 2nd Sunday of each month).
PASTOR BRAD HOPPER & JOSHUA MARSHMAN
Sharing About Lebanon Trip

Come hear about the incredible experience that Pastor Brad and Joshua had during their time in Lebanon. Wednesday, September 13, at 7 pm in The Commons

FALL & WINTER CHILDREN/TEEN CONSIGNMENT SALE
SEPTEMBER 16
8 am - 12 pm
1 - 3 pm - Half Price on Selected Items

VOLUNTEER OR BECOME A CONSIGNOR
ReduceReuseConsign.com

CHILDREN’S MUSIC MINISTRY
Begins Thursday, September 7!
Registration Now Open!
If questions, please contact Emily@MatthewsUMC.org

Register now under Music on the Experiences Tab at Kids.MatthewsUMC.org.

PARENT/TEEN NIGHT
Sunday, September 10, 5:30 - 7:30 pm
This is a great time of community with other parents, students and leaders involved in this ministry. Please bring a covered dish to share!

FALL CONSIGNMENT SALE
September 14 - 16, Shift Times Vary
The Consignment Sale is an opportunity for youth and families to serve in our community and raise funds. Visit the website for more info and to sign up.

THIS PICTURE
Games are a huge part of youth group and Gaga Ball is always a favorite!

FIND US
youth.matthewsumc.org
facebook: Matthews UMC Youth, twitter: @youth_MUMC
instagram: therealmumc

SENIOR COOKOUT
October 7, 6 - 8 pm at Corey’s House
Don’t miss out on this great grade level event! A night of backyard fun, friendships, grilling, and fire pit s’mores for our 12th grade students. Contact Corey if you plan to attend.

UPCOMING
September 10 - Parent Teen Night
September 17 - Youth Group
September 24 - Youth Group

UNITED YOUTH
REACH. TEACH. PRAISE. SERVE. MATTHEWS UNITED METHODIST
Please visit Adult Ministries under the Reach tab at matthewsumc.org to view the Adult Ministries Calendar.
CCH Intercessory Prayer: Saturdays from 5:30 - 7:00 am in the Sanctuary. Everyone is invited to join us to pray for our own families, this Church and this Nation.

Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near.
Isaiah 55:6

Please remember in your prayers:
All those in our church family with special needs and concerns.

Global Impact Prayer: Father God, prepare our spirits now to receive our homeless guests at Room In the Inn this fall. Open our eyes to see as you see, hearts to love as you love, hands to serve as you serve. May all our guests this season draw closer to you through the Jesus in us.

MATTHEWS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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Like us on Facebook, Follow us on Twitter & Instagram, and Watch us on Vimeo @MatthewsUMC

The Celebration newsletter is a weekly publication for the families and friends of Matthews United Methodist Church. The deadline to submit an article is noon each Monday, the week of publication. If you would like to submit information for publication, please e-mail your articles to communications@matthewsumc.org or drop them off at the Church Office with “Celebration request” noted on the envelope. Please note that all articles are subject to editing for space and content. Subscribe online at MatthewsUMC.org.