

NFAMLP NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2026

Beginning July 1, I will be celebrating twenty years of pastoral ministry in which four of those years are in retired pastoral ministry. Thanks be to God I have only served two churches in half time appointments, 17 years at my first appointment and beginning my 4th year in retirement service.

During my ministry in my first appointment, there was a member (Hilda May Hurricane), she was sweet but could disrupt a meeting in a heartbeat, at the end of her deliberation she would calmly say, "Why Can't We All Just Get Along Together?" and take her seat. It left us all in awe and amazement.

At this moment in time, we are all in a moment where the anxiety level is at its the highest. Our families are broken, loss of jobs, immigration deportation, the world at war and the list goes on and on, so today I ask the question "Why Can't We Just Get Along?" Thanks be to God my present appointment is progressive, knows how to manage money and love CHURCH, hallelujah.

This brings me to one of my favorite Bible scholars, "Dr. Luke". Information about him is limited, he was a Gentile and a physician by profession (Colossians 4:14 – "Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.") He was place as one of Paul's traveling evangelistic team and according to Paul was a 'fellow laborer'. Dr. Luke wrote his Gospel with a twofold purpose. First, his purpose was literary and historical, secondly, his purpose was spiritual. He presented the person of Christ as the perfect, divine Man and Savior of the world. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh.

Dr. Luke states that he examined Jesus and his findings are that Jesus is God. He came to the same conclusion as John didn't but his procedure and technique were different.

- Matthew presents the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, King, and Redeemer.
- Mark presents Christ as the mighty Conqueror and Ruler of the world.
- John presents Christ as the Son of God.
- Luke presents the perfect, divine Son of God as our great High Priest, touched with the feeling of our emotional frailties, able to extend help and mercy in the time of need and love.

Now back to the hurricane, the elephant in the room. My spiritual mine took me to Luke 9:23 – "Then He said to them all. If anyone desires to come after Me, let us deny ourselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me." Jesus outlines the cost and reward of discipleship. He instructs His followers to deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and lose their lives for His sake, emphasizing the promise that the present day will come and some would see the kingdom of God before dying. (Hilda May Hurricane) could create habit, take her seat as if she calmed the storm.

Otis Moss III, book "Dancing in the Darkness", writes "I do not know your family background, whether or not you pray, your gender or how you vote, *"Is there anything we could agrees on, any project that we share?"* There is a feeling of a deep unease about this nation. If America

were music, its chords would be clashing, its rhythm off. If it were a time, it would be midnight, a political midnight in which more than any time since the Civil War, we are divided: community against community, neighbor against neighbor, citizen against citizen. Elections come and go but still we struggle to speak across the divides. Has it ever been harder to get through Thanksgiving dinner without an argument?

Otis Moss III –continues to write that our political midnight fight over politics is not our trouble at all. What we yearn for will never be found by rearranging politicians, our hope for more than a political victory. We hunger for the bread of love wrapped in the arms of Jesus. We will never be satisfied by what we find in the political systems or social media networks. We long to hear the Word of the 'Trinity' being preached every Sunday and Bible Study during the week.

Beloved, those hurricanes will come but they will not live forever, it's a promise. I close by quoting this hymn, "Together Let Us Sweetly Live.

Together let us sweetly live. I am bound for the land of Canaan. Together love to Jesus give; I am bound for the land of Canaan.

Our songs of praise shall fill the skies; I am bound for the land of Canaan. While higher still our joys shall rise; I am bound for the land of Canaan.

O Canaan, bright Canaan. I am bound for the land of Canaan. O Canaan, it is my happy home. I am bound for the land of Canaan.

The prophet Isaiah gives us hope, drawing heavily on verse **Isaiah 66:13**: "*As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you.*" This verse is often quoted as a reminder that God holds you on your hardest days and provides peace in times of storm.

Our 2026 Annual Gathering to be held in Ocala, Florida from September 15 - 17th. We will be spending time with the Rev. Dr. Michael Beck, the Director of the Fresh Expressions movement in the UMC. We will explore new ways to be the Church in the world today. Each attendee will receive a copy of his book, *Deep Roots, Wild Branches: Cultivating a Blended Ecology of Church for a Changing World*. For more information on the Gathering or the National Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors check out our website at NFAMLP.org

In Christ,
Rev. Jerry Colbert
Treasurer
NFAMLP