

# 04-04-18 Wednesday Musing

Today is a significant day in one respect – it marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. As such, it is a day to think about how far we have come in race relations, and how far we still have to go. As a nation we elected an African-American as President – two times, but we are also a nation where unarmed black men are repeatedly gunned down or beaten by police. Most recently in the news was a young man in Sacramento who was shot in the back by police in his grandmother’s yard while holding a cell phone, and a black man in Ashville who was choked, beaten and tazed for jay-walking late one night after a long day at work. It’s hard to imagine that either of these events would have happened if the victims had been white.

50 years ago today Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, TN. He was there to stand up for sanitation workers who were grossly underpaid and worked in dangerous conditions. Part of what sparked that protest were two workers who had recently been crushed to death in a trash compactor.

This past Sunday after our Easter Sunday service some friends invited a group of us over for dinner. Lois and John have a daughter who lives in Memphis working as a doctor at the VA Hospital. They go out to visit with some regularity and one of the things they said on Sunday was that Beale Street is really the only integrated place in Memphis – everything else is segregated, and prejudice and discrimination are perhaps not as blatant as they once were, but they seem to be just as deeply entrenched.

Anniversaries provide an opportunity to reflect, so perhaps today should be a day for us to reflect upon our own biases and prejudices and what we do or don’t do to help promote our national core value of equality for all.

Looking back on this past Holy Week, a word of thanks must be said to the Board of Deacons for hosting that wonderful Easter morning breakfast. Also, thanks to Beth Painter for filling in for Matt in an emergency situation on Sunday, and despite being reduced in numbers because of the flu, the choir was terrific!

I also want to call your attention to the food barrel inside the door from the parking lot in the Bray Fellowship Hall. It’s full now, but folks from Allied Churches will come by to collect these offerings soon – then we’ll have the opportunity to fill it up again. At the most recent Deacon’s meeting, it was suggested that we make a special effort on the first Sunday of each month, on “Communion Sunday,” to bring in food that will help to feed others. Canned and dried foods are what is needed, but they can also make use of old devotionals like the Upper Room. You can recycle these by passing them on to others. These can also go in the food barrel.

Finally, remember tickets to the Spaghetti Supper are on sale for \$9. You can get yours from any deacon. And if you’d be willing to sell some tickets yourself, see Mike Smith. Then, be sure to mark April 22<sup>nd</sup> for our Hot Dog lunch and cake auction.

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On the prayer concern front, Mark Garrison continues to be hospitalized in Akron, Ohio as he recovers from surgery. He is making progress, but it is slow going. Benjie's surgery went well this past week. He was even out walking without his cane today. Faye Strickland was in the hospital for several days suffering from significant digestive issues. She returned home yesterday but is still going slow for her as well.

On Sunday it was wonderful to welcome back Troy and Peggy Johnson, Shirley Perry, Glenna Lewis and Mack Painter. Elijah Johnson was also visiting after having moved to Orlando last year.

Keith Miller continues to battle the flu. Harvey Sharpe will have more surgery on Friday for his on-going battle with skin cancer. Then, please remember to keep in your prayers: Donna Freeman, Nancy Thomas, Louise Walters, Parkie King and Vera Reeder.

Hope to see you Sunday.

Mark