

October 2021



## NOT EVERYONE IS A LIFE SENTENCE

It is said people come into our lives for a reason; for a season; or for life. The challenge is knowing which category. Which to hold on to for a moment; which to hold loosely; and which to hold tightly. Take a moment to think about the people God has allowed to pass your way? Some memories bring about a smile; others take you to the brink of tears; a rare few take your breath away; but all have helped shape the person you are, and are becoming. Rightly so, the numbers are greatest for those that came for a reason, and least

for those that came for a lifetime. Now imagine those same people bringing you to their remembrance. Are those persons better off for having been in your circle of influence? Are you intentional in your encounters? Is your objective to be an ambassador of God's never changing love, His life changing word, and His promise of eternal life - or is your desire to not upset the apple cart and say whatever it



takes to be liked? We need to use discernment about those in our sphere of influence. Scripture calls us to encourage one another (1 Thess 5:11), but we are not to do this blindly or without discernment. In this age of political correctness, acceptance of alternative lifestyles, and personal choice – we are often challenged to compromise our values/beliefs to keep the peace. But sometimes the cost of *that peace* is too great.

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. (1 Thess 5:11)

Homosexuality, once in the closet, is *now legal in the courts*. Lying, once forbidden by every parent, is now just *alternative facts*. The COVID-19 vaccine, that is scientifically proven to minimize the likelihood of death from the virus, while some think is optional and we should *respect free choice* to refuse to get vaccinated. As a chosen people, we must stand firm knowing that “*The Lord is my strong rock.....in him will I trust* (Psalms 18:2). Not all people are lifers; enjoy the time you have with them. When God sees fit to move them on, don't resist. He promised never to leave or forsake us, so trust His will. We in the body of Progressive are blessed with caring, loving, brothers and sisters who embrace one another – offering sincere love and hope. We don't always agree on every practice, but we collectively value the brotherhood and sisterhood we have in PMBC.


Your Servant for Life, *Pastor Earl C. Stuckey*



## A GOOD READ

How can they hear without a preacher, and how can they learn without a teacher? Our featured member this month doesn't hold the title of preacher, but she – *Stephanie Allen* – has a full lock on “teacher”. Stephanie is yet another example of *good things straight out of Oakland*. Unlike today when a video game is preferred over a book, Stephanie grew up with a love for reading. She earned a Bachelor and a Master Degree in education; teaching credential from SF State University; Reading Specialist credential from Cal State University, Hayward; and certified Reading Recovery Teacher from Holy Names College! Stephanie was a teacher in the Oakland Unified School district for 35 years before retiring. As testimony of her value, she continues to work as a substitute teacher and volunteer tutor – not for fame or glory - but rather to be regarded as one who aspired that every child learns to read! Stephanie advocates for reading, and she leads by example. For the past 12-13 years she has read through the bible each year, utilizing a different translation. She currently owns 15 bibles! Her love of reading, and reading God's word, are not what brought her to PMBC; it was music. Stephanie was a Sunday School teacher and choir member at First A.M.E Church in Oakland. The choir joined PMBC in a musical – and the rest is history. Well, that and the 2-year trial period she spent attending worship service before becoming a member. Stephanie has always been engaged in ministry, first serving in the nursery; later singing in the choir; and now a beloved Facilitator in the Adult Sunday School. She has coordinated our service for the National Day of Prayer for the past 5 years. A favorite scripture, “*I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?*” (Jeremiah 32:27). A favorite pastime when taking time for self – enjoying a good read or watching a rerun of Gunsmoke while enjoying a chocolate chip cookie or a combo-meal from McDonalds! Of her many gifts, we appreciate her service as Sunday School facilitator; her service in the Kitchen Ministry; and her gift of encouragement freely shared by greeting cards mailed throughout the year. Stephanie's ministry is not limited to the 4-walls of PMBC. She is active in her community, previously serving as President of the neighborhood council for five years; and she is on speed dial with her Councilmember, sharing the needs and successes in her community. If you time it right, you might find her gathering and



 distributing food bags/boxes to share with those in need, or on Bancroft Ave donning her safety vest, gloves, and mask with stick in hand picking up trash and noting abandoned vehicles to report for removal. Her motivation comes from scripture “*and let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith* (Galations 6:9-10). Stephanie is the proud mother of son Marcus, and grandmother of three. Stephanie says she prays for thoughts, words, and actions that will please God, and hopes and prays to do good and not grow weary in doing good. Stephanie, you're doing just that! And we thank God for you!

# DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT!



It remains true, we should never leave home without the word of God. And in this day of COVID, the variants, and expanding regulations requiring proof of vaccination to enter public places – we encourage you to be prepared. Put your vaccination card in your purse/wallet, put a copy on your phone, or download an “App” so you, as an ambassador of Christ, are prepared to comply when asked.

## THE HARVEST

*Then He said to his disciples, The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” (Matt 9:37)*

1. Who said “the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few”?

Jesus          Paul          Peter          Boaz

2. Which major feast coincided with the wheat harvest?

First fruits    Pentecost          Passover    Tabernacle

3. How many fruits of the spirit does Paul list in Galatians?

Three          Four          Six          Nine

4. On which day of creation did God create fruit-bearing trees?

Third          Fourth          Fifth          Sixth



5. Why were the Israelites told not to gather the gleanings of the harvest?

To feed wild animals//To provide for the poor//To keep the land fertile

6. What sort of tree did Jesus curse for bearing no fruit?

Pomegranate    Almond    Olive    Fig

7. What was special about the harvest in the sabbatical year?

There wasn't one//It produced double//It was 2 months early//Only one type of crop was sown and harvested

8. At the beginning of which harvest did Naomi and Ruth go to Bethlehem?

Wheat          Grape          Barley          Rye



It's **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**. Annually, we join the world in providing a reminder of the potentially deadly consequences of breast cancer. PMBC emphasis day is October 24<sup>th</sup>. This year we are flipping the script. We want to remind you – our sisters and our brothers - of the importance of self-care; regular examinations; and quality of life before and after a diagnosis of breast cancer. Sadly, one of the major contributors to a death sentence from breast cancer is delayed diagnosis.

We can't always control the incidence of breast cancer, but we are not helpless in the battle. Give yourself a fighting chance. Fight for the body and life God has given you. See something, feel something, do something. You know your body better than anyone. If something doesn't feel or look right, get a professional diagnosis. Go see your doctor. Take a friend or relative with you for support. You have sisters in PMBC that have traveled along that road who are just a call away. We praise God for walking the journey with our PMBC sisters who have, or are dealing with a diagnosis. Cancer is real, but so is God. Let's pledge to collectively, and consistently pray for a cure to all cancer. Remember ~ **EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES!** Continue screenings in spite of the pandemic.



*Linda Thomas, Thankful Breast Cancer Survivor*

## ARE UP REALLY OKAY?

Don't under estimate the mental toll from COVID, violence, health, housing, financial and relational strain. Have you ever responded this way when asked "*how are you doing?*" "It's crazy but this too shall pass"; "I'm just taking it one day at a time"; "Let go and trust God." You wouldn't respond this way to a heart attack. Don't respond this way to stress or mental health. Don't let shame or the thought of embarrassment keep you from getting the help you need with this very real condition. One confidential resource is our Biblical Counseling Team, but there are many other trusted services. Don't wait. Act today. The life you save may well be your own. *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)*

## The Harvest/Answers

1	Jesus (Matt 9:37)	5	To Provide for poor (Lev. 23:22)
2	Pentecost (Ex 34:22)	6	Fig (Matt 21:18-21)
3	Nine (Gal 5:22-23)	7	There wasn't one (Lev 25:1-7)
4	Third (Gen 1:11-13)	8	Barley (Ruth 1:22)