

# THE FORECAST

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter

JUNE 30, 2021

## Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church

3900 Saint Charles Ave New Orleans LA 70115 // 504.899.3431 // [www.raynenola.org](http://www.raynenola.org)



### PLEASE NOTE

**HYBRID WORSHIP  
(ON-SITE & ONLINE)  
IN THE  
SANCTUARY  
AT 8:30A & 11A**

In observance of July 4th, the church office will be closed on Monday, July 5th. We wish you and your families a safe and happy Independence Day.

### Summer Office Hours

**Monday:**

9a-1p

**Tuesday:**

10a-2p

**Wednesday:**

12-5p

**Thursday:**

10a-2p

**Friday:**

Closed

### **"THE ONLY THING WORTH WRITING ABOUT IS THE HEART IN CONFLICT WITH ITSELF. ~ WILLIAM FAULKNER**

Faulker mentioned this idea upon receiving his Nobel Prize in Literature (1949). And I believe him; I mean, the entire story contained in sacred scripture is God's story dealing with our humanity - the human heart in conflict with itself. What to worship. Whom to revere. How to love. Whom to serve. The biblical witness, if only by hundreds of years of popularity and unpopularity perhaps, shows this to be true. Both Faulker and the Lord God hold my hand into this weekend, where we try to balance our patriotism with our faith in Christ. Confusing one with the other injures both.

In the face of festivities and firecrackers across the United States of America, I feel the conflict in my heart. Thanks be to God, we are coming to places that are more honest and faithful to hold the enormous tension of the American experience. To me this sounds something like acknowledging in the same moment: *thank you, Lord, for this freedom and all who've helped us arrive here; and we confess, Lord, this freedom of ours we have used to sin, damaging the lives of untold millions, because we have used our liberty for devastating evils, particularly against native american tribes and enslaved black bodies.* I'm at a place in my life that I feel more faithful expressing the conflict, no longer satisfied to turn the blind eye to white supremacy, racism, and nationalism stemming from reprehensible understandings of Christianity and the founding of our country.

Walter Brueggemann calls our dominant culture the temptation toward "military consumerism" - feeding the glut of political exceptionalism (as if America was divinely founded) and protecting the status quo of western white supremacy (as if all other ethnic identities aren't held in the divine image). His point is that daily we get to choose: to which shall we bow? The gospel of Jesus Christ that invites all, convicts all, comforts all, and forgives all no matter the identity of nation, language, color or creed; or the ideology of nationalism that, like patriotism on steroids, tempts us toward glorifying violence, magnifying differences, and practicing ways to exclude others. False choice? Hardly it seems; since Moses and the tragedy of the golden calf, the decision toward liberation has been conflicted. The idolatry of so-called "Christian nationalism" shows the decision to be all too true. Jesus chimes in here: *No one can serve two masters; either you'll hate the one and love the other, or you'll be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.* Wealth of American identity included...

What to do then? Thank the Lord, yes. Thank the Lord for the privilege of place - America the beautiful indeed. Yet let us take pains not to worship the place, the power, or the privilege itself, because the beauty we see may well be the horror felt by others. Instead, may we seek to be unencumbered from the dominant culture? May we disentangle the gospel of Jesus Christ from the American experience - to tell the truth about ourselves and our culture that celebrates exploitation and violence. May we, as the Body of Christ, witness and act out an alternative way - to show and share hospitality to anyone in need, generosity and forgiveness to those who trespass against us, as to ourselves who trespass against others.

Galatians 3:28,

*Jay*

# RACIAL HEALING ACTION STEPS

---

More than 2 dozen of our church's participants recently concluded a study of *The Racial Healing Handbook*, by Anneliese Singh.

Rev. Lenda Faye Matthews and Pastor Jay co-facilitated this group. We're excited to share our efforts with our Rayne community of faith.

Over the next few months, we welcome our entire congregation to help us continue racial healing in our congregation and our neighborhoods:

Some of the action steps ahead are:

- Service of Healing - August 15th - 8:30a and 11a worship - we plan to reflect, to remember and to reconcile from the wounds of white supremacy and racism.
- Needs Assessment - we plan to listen better to our neighbors that are African American and to let their experiences form our decisions about community.
- Leadership Audit - we plan to discover ways within Rayne's leadership to use our influence to deepen racial healing in our congregation.
- First 72 Plus - we plan to support ways that end cycles of incarceration and encourage community engagement (<https://www.first72plus.org/our-vision-mission>).

If you would like to know more about our study or about ways to lend a hand, please contact Carol Thiele:  
[carol.thiele@raynenola.org](mailto:carol.thiele@raynenola.org).

## VBS WITH A TWIST

---

*Be strong in the Lord this summer at Rayne!*

**July 11- August 8**

Each Sunday during Children's Church & Sunday School in the Education building...  
**It's Vacation Bible Sunday School!**

We will spend five Sundays focusing on different Bible characters who armor up with God. Teachings with crafts and science experiments will help us learn how God's love gives us the power to do amazing things!

# LECTIONARY

---

*A weekly set of Scripture readings.*

**July 4**

2 Samuel 5:1-5,9-10 - Psalm 48  
2 Corinthians 12:2-10 - Mark 6:1-13

**July 11**

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19 - Psalm 24  
Ephesians 1:3-14 - Mark 6:14-29

## THE SCHOOL FOR CONTEMPLATIVE LIVING

---

**Just Mercy**, by Bryan Stevenson

A free Zoom book study and discussion with Centering Prayer. **Mondays, Noon-1:30p**, beginning on July 19th.

**Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul: Celtic Wisdom for Reawakening to What Our Souls Know and Healing the World**, by John Philip Newell

A free Zoom book study and discussion with Centering Prayer. **Wednesdays, 11:30a-1p**, beginning on July 14th.

For more information go to:  
[www.theschoolforcontemplativeliving.com](http://www.theschoolforcontemplativeliving.com).

To join one of these opportunities email the SCL by contacting William:  
[livingschool12@gmail.com](mailto:livingschool12@gmail.com)

## LOOKING FOR ARTISTS!

---

**Calling All Artists - Mark Your Calendars!**

The Annual Rayne Art Exhibit will be held on Saturday and Sunday afternoons on September 18th & 19th in Fellowship Hall.

All you talented artists who desire to participate please let the United Methodist Men (UMM) know and they'll get you on their list. Contact Gary Prechter at 504-913-7527, Mike Murphy at 504-884-0630, or Mal McLetchie at 504-508-0010 to register and for more information.

# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

In our Making Room Campaign we received a total of **\$1,378,000** in pledges.

As of May we have received **\$616,000** (45%).

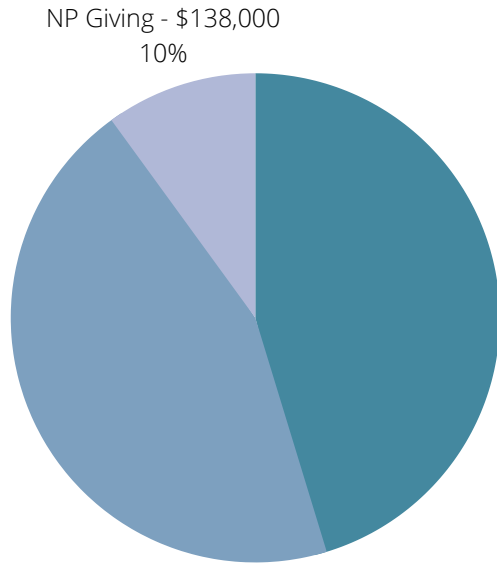
An additional **\$138,000** given (non-pledged).

All together the Making Room campaign has received a total of **\$754,000**.

To date, **\$312,000** has been spent.

*Thank you for your support and generosity!*

We are excited for the projects to come in 2021 and beyond!

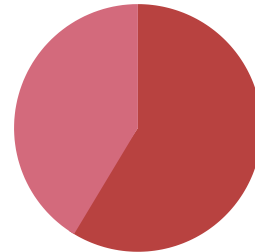


## PLEDGE PROGRESS

Amount Remaining - \$624,000  
45.3%

Received Pledges - \$616,000  
44.7%

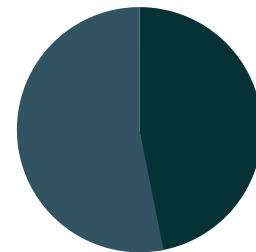
Amount Spent - \$312,000  
41.4%



Amount Received (not yet spent) - \$442,000  
58.6%

## SPENDING PROGRESS

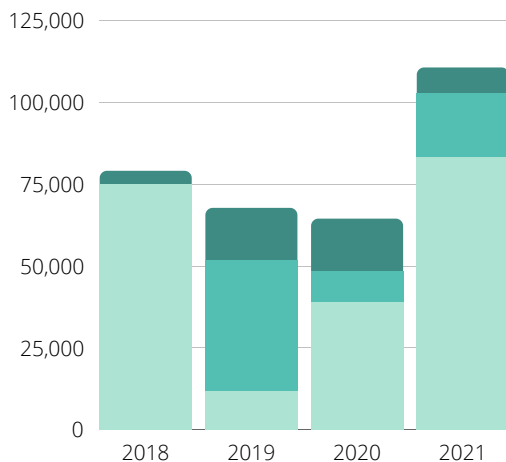
Epiphany House - \$217,231  
53.1%



Main Building - \$191,575  
46.9%

## PROPERTY PROGRESS

- \$44,000** on consultant fee.
- \$68,000** to replenish funding of the Epiphany House purchase.
- \$200,000** on projects.



## YEARLY PROGRESS

**Our completed projects are an updated fire alarm system, an electrical upgrade, and the audio video system.**

**Upcoming projects include an accessibility ramp into the Sanctuary and major upgrades in electrical, paint/decor, and more in the Epiphany House.**

# SUNDAY SCHOOL

---

**Sundays, 9:45a-10:45a**  
**Hybrid - On-Site & Online!**

## **Wilderness Class**

Friendship Room (Room 108)

The Wilderness Class meets in a room off of the Fellowship Hall. Leadership of the studies is shared between several class members. The Wilderness Class has a Crawfish Boil and a Christmas Party each year and enjoys contributing to special projects such as the Food Pantry.

### Current Study: Lectionary Bible

The focus will be each week's Lectionary passage as the study and as the basis of wonderful, lively discussions. Each week the class will be taking a look at our weekly worship Scripture.

## **Pastor's Class**

Parsonage (1421 Constantinople St.)

This class meets with Pastor Jay, discussing the Scripture shared in Worship each week. It is a great opportunity to dive deeper and get more perspectives!

## **One in the Spirit**

Library (Room 107)

This class studies contemporary Biblical theology as well as books by current authors. This class has a wide variety of ages and backgrounds - a place for everyone!

Current study: *Bamboozled by Jesus: How God Tricked Me into the Life of My Dreams* by Yvonne Orji. Orji has never shied away from being unapologetically herself, and that includes being outspoken about her faith. Known for interpreting Biblical stories and metaphors to fit current times, her humorous and accessible approach to faith leaves even non-believers inspired and wanting more.

## **FaithWorks**

Parlor (Room 103)

This class utilizes a discussion format, as they study a variety of Bible-based works that often include personal spirituality and/or social justice issues. They explore issues related to bringing one's faith to bear in the workplace.

### Current study: Ecclesiastes

Every day bombards us with so many desires, and we wish we could pursue them all. Ecclesiastes recounts the story of one person who decided to try. He denied himself nothing that he wanted: Money. Sex. Power. Prestige. Knowledge. Experiences. See where his desires led him and what he learned through it all.

## **Children**

The Education Building (Rooms 201 & 203)

Godly Play is back in the building! Children's Sunday School will meet on-site for ages 3 to 5th grade. The Godly Play approach helps children to explore their faith through story and play!

## **Youth**

Meet in the Youth Room (Room 219)

Our Youth Group is trying a new thing... We will walk to go eat breakfast outside and spend some quality time together. Students 6th through 12th grade are welcome!

# RAYNE'S GUIDELINES

**On-site & Online Worship: 8:30a & 11a**

**Sunday School: 9:45-10:45a**

Services will take place in the Historic Sanctuary and streamed on Facebook Live.

## ● PARTICIPATING ON-SITE

-**Masks:** You will be asked to wear a mask *properly* for on-site worship and activities. Our experts have helped us understand that masks save lives, yours and others. If you do not bring a mask, we will have plenty of masks available. Your mask should cover both your mouth and nose.

-**No Reservations:** we are no longer asking you to make reservations for worship. We will note your attendance as you arrive - we are so glad when you worship with us!

-**Arriving:** Please arrive *no more than 20 minutes before Worship* and enter through the St. Charles Avenue or Pitt Street entrances. **The Sanctuary and Pitt Street (Green) doors will not be opened until 20 minutes before Worship.**

-**Precautions:** Please practice good hygiene: avoid touching your face, use the hand sanitizer that is available, and sneeze or cough into your elbow or mask. Please respect others, as we all have different comfortabilities and vaccination statuses. Precautions within worship include: adapted offering and communion, encouraged distancing, and no physical gathering at the Red Steps (a Moment for Children).

-**Changes:** The guidelines will be updated regularly. We will be constantly assessing the current health risks. It is important for us to respond to new information and "do no harm."

## ● PARTICIPATING ONLINE

-**Worship:** We have continued opportunities for Worship Online. All on-site worship services will be streamed on Facebook Live. Go to [www.facebook.com/raynenola.org](http://www.facebook.com/raynenola.org) to join us in Worship Online.

-**Sunday School Classes and Small Groups:** Please contact 899-3431 or [shaun.darnall@raynenola.org](mailto:shaun.darnall@raynenola.org) if you're interested in attending a class online.

# PRAYER LIST

---

## **We pray for healing of –**

Sylvia Murphy's sister - Mary Sandifer, Gary and Carol's daughter - Ashley Kennan,  
Martha Gatlin's son - John Bellew, Darien Mason, Sr.,  
Tim Christy, Doris Billings, Sue Aspinwall, Richard Moore, Ray Cook,  
Mac Hyman, the Humphreys - Ann, Buel and Carol,  
Dan Sikes, Stephanie Stennett, Chuck Pate, Rick Hammontree,  
Andrew McLetchie, Barbara Everett and her daughter - Renee, Judy Mastainich,  
and Marilyn Miller's brother - David and his spouse Debbie.

## **We pray for healing of –**

Carla Meyers and the Frey Family in the loss of her aunt, Sylvia Frey.



## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

---

James 4:8 reminds us, *“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”*

In this time of social distancing, comfort is found sensing the nearness of the Creator.

If you would like to share prayer requests,  
email them to Pastor Marissa - [marissa@raynenola.org](mailto:marissa@raynenola.org).  
Or mail a note to the church addressed with "Attention: Marissa."

Please indicate if the request is public (shared in the newsletter)  
or private (supplied to the Intercessory Prayer Group).