A Note from Our Pastors:  

A Matter of Life and Death

Death and life have been on our minds recently. This winter, the Memorial Garden Committee of Limestone Church began its work, looking at the possibilities for having a memorial garden here at the church. We hope this garden will be a place where people will have their ashes placed and where loved ones can come for quiet meditation. Last Fall, we were able to attend a seminar on “Death and the Meaning of Life.” The written description of the seminar includes the following reflections:

“What happens when a person dies?… How does one deal with the loss of a loved one? How do our funeral practices compare with those of other religions and cultures? But the topic of death also raises personal questions of life: What is the meaning and purpose of our existence? What can I accomplish in my time here? How should I treat my elders, my peers, and my juniors who will pre-decease or survive me?”

The course title points to an important truth: The way we understand death affects the way we live.

First Corinthians 15 is the most detailed chapter in the entire Bible about the gift of eternal life that we have because of Jesus’ resurrection. The very next chapter, 1 Corinthians 16, moves on to a very practical discussion of stewardship. There Paul points to the importance of financial giving to support the work of the church. These two themes are side by side not only in the Bible, but in the way we live out our faith. God gives us eternal life. Our giving to God and to the work of his Church is a way for us to show our gratitude for the gift of life, now and forever.

Likewise, in the church seasons of the year, death and life are seen side by side. Lent is a time when we remember Jesus’ suffering and death for our sakes, as well as Jesus’ call to discipleship. We respond by giving gifts of life: we give to the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering to help people suffering in times of disaster and to promote long-term development. As we remember Jesus’ death, we are thankful for his showing God’s love in all of its fullness, and so we work to bring his life-giving love to others. Easter is a time when we celebrate God’s love that triumphs over suffering and death.

We respond in gratitude for the gift of life by giving to God’s work in the world, and one important way to do that is through our wills.

We hope that, as you reflect on the meaning of death and life, you will join us in including Limestone Church in your will. Sometimes when people are planning their wills, they think they only want to leave money to loved ones. But one of the most important things you can do for those you love is to make sure there is a strong, vibrant church. Your family may or may not live in the community near Limestone Church, but as you support this church, you make the world a better place for everyone.

In the end, each one of us will come to a time when we need to answer to God. Someone once asked an insightful question: “Five minutes after you die, what are you going to wish you had done in your life?” Will you wish that you had loved more, forgiven more, given more?

In another part of this issue of The Chronicle, there is a list of the members of the Endowment Committee; they are available to talk with you about including the church and its work in your will. As your pastors, we are available as well—to help you plan out a funeral, to think about making decisions for the end of life, to consider your financial stewardship—or to consider relationships with loved ones while you are still living.

May God be with you as you consider challenging questions that are matters of life and death, and may you know the joy of God’s gift of eternal life in this upcoming Easter season.

Grace and Peace,

Bruce and Carolyn Gillette

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, says the Spirit.
They will rest from their labors, and their deeds follow them.

Revelation 14:13