

WRITING

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



THE 'IF' FACTOR



MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

I have realized that you cannot spell life without including **IF**. **IF** is the choice I wake up with every morning. Now I know you are saying, "This is not true." So let me tell you a story.

I have dreams of walking into the new Union Baptist Church, traveling the world or simply being able to maintain my goal weight. I know what I need to do to accomplish these goals: I need a vision that comes with faith that the Lord will provide.

2 Corinthians 9:8 (KJV) tells me, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

But instead I doubt. I say **IF** I... This statement identifies a choice. The free will God gave us is one of my biggest downfalls. I suffer from 'If It Is In Front of Me' Syndrome.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Revelation 3: 20 (AKJV)

As we were pulling together this quarter's newsletter many of us had the opportunity to wrestle with the **IFs** of life. I am prayerful that you will want to go on this **IF** journey with me.

Ask yourself the questions below, or come up with your own. Look to the scripture. A very wise one told me, "All the answers to life's questions can be found in the scriptures. We need to be open to fully understand how they impact us in our daily lives. I am glad that you turned to something devotional in a time of need. God is speaking directly to you. Listen for that 'wee small voice' in the cacophony of all the white noise in our lives. The Holy Spirit will guide and direct you."

I think she must have heard this in a sermon.

- IF** I tithe every Sunday?
- IF** I stop procrastinating?
- IF** I follow what God says in his WORD?

Jevata

Have you ever given thought to the word **IF**?

IF is a powerful word to be so small. **IF** this or **IF** that; it's the ruler of all questions!

IF you could do anything.....?

IF you were 20 years younger....?

These are the types of questions that could significantly impact lives. Someone once said to me,

"If IF was a fifth we'd all be drunk!"

How true is that statement?!?!?

Can you live without **IFs**? You can if you are a believer in Jesus Christ. We put our trust and faith in God; we walk by faith, not by sight.

So it is not a matter of **IF**, but **WHEN**!!



We care about what you think!
Share your thoughts with the Vision Ministry.
Email us at atavej@yahoo.com

IN THIS ISSUE	
Message from the Editor	Message From Our Pastor
What Am I Building?	Featured Article
Capital Campaign Stats	Featured Interview

WRITING

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

the



A Message From Our Pastor

I was once told that, “IF”, ‘Would Have’, ‘Should Have’, and ‘Could Have’ were a quartet called the ‘Maybe Brothers’, and collectively they didn’t amount to much more than a hill of beans.” Now that statement appears humorous on the surface, but the underlying meaning is devastating to many people who would attempt to engage life in ways that are out of their particular comfort zone.

IF is a challenging word, in that most contracts, covenants or agreements hinge on the word IF. In fact even God uses this word to convey the bi-lateral nature of His covenant with Israel. We hear God saying to His people in Deuteronomy, “**IF** you be willing and obedient, **IF** you harken diligently to the voice of your God, and keep His commandments”... And so God is concerned with our IFs.

Let it not be said of you as an individual, and God forbid, of we as a Church body, that we could have, would have, and should have done great things for the kingdom of God IF we had just trusted God to provide for our needs. Let it not be said that you could have, should have, and would have been a supporter of what God is doing in your church’s ministry, and mission, IF you had just allowed yourself to trust God for your provision support in prayer, in person, and in finance.

IF we truly trust in The Lord with ALL of our heart, then we shall move past the mystery of the ‘Maybe Brothers’, and become committed to God, His Word, His will, His purpose, and His Church. And IF that happens, “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the hearts of man the great things God has prepared for the Union Baptist Church”! The best is yet to come....

IF you get on board...

Be blessed, PAS

“... And so God is
concerned with our
IFs.”

News Letter Contributors:

Pastor Benjamin T. Hailey Pastor Nathaniel H. Jenkins
Jevata Crawford Sheri Williams
Leigh Strothers

"FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT!"



 **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**

IF you had a goal that your mind says is unrealistic, but God says it is possible, what should you do?

Ask for help!

We are asking for your prayers for the Capital Campaign:

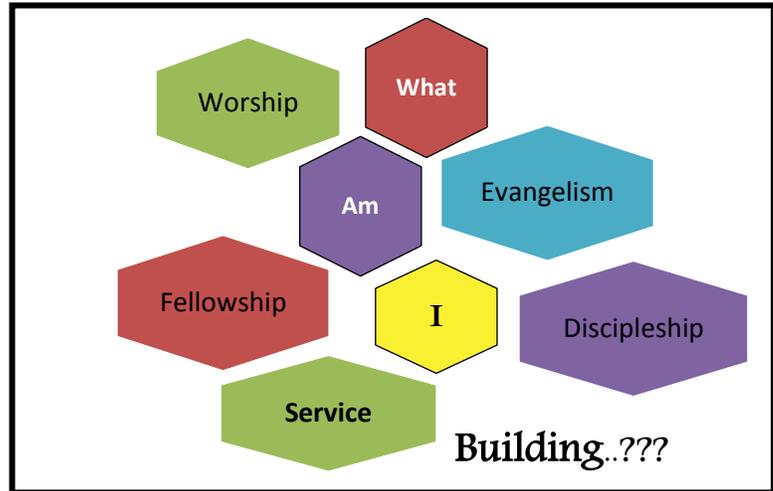
154 Members have said yes.

We are asking for **50** additional Members to say yes in July.

"You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy."
John 16:24 (ESV)



WHAT AM I BUILDING?



The Building Section

What would your life look like if you pushed past the 'IF'???

'If only I could...' 'If only I didn't....' In order for us to push past the 'IF' we must **BUILD** our **FAITH** in the **POWER** that is within us; *Holy Spirit Power!*

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 NIV

Many Christians have heard from the Lord and know what their purpose is but they allow fear to stop them dead in their tracks. Once fear sets in, indecision follows; with indecision comes procrastination; with procrastination comes paralysis... and nothing changes.

Fear of the unknown.... Fear of... the 'IF'

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.
2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV*

Are you tempted to fear? To hesitate in moving forward in God's Will for your life? As a renewed being in Christ we have not been given the spirit of fear but there is an Adversary who would love to keep us in bondage to fear. To keep us stuck in the 'What If...'.

We must always remember that when we move according to God's Will we already have the victory!

Push past the moment of hesitation by building your trust in the truth of God's Word. This truth conveys power through His Spirit, power to push past the fear. We must *power* walk by Faith, in His Will, for His Glory!

What are you doing to build your faith in the power that is within you?

Begin the building of your faith by communicating with God through prayer and His Word. Perfect your faith by taking that first step toward your God given purpose!

"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 NIV

We should move at God's pace but we *must* move!



FEATURED ARTICLE

"IF"



Pastor Nathaniel H. Jenkins

Rudyard Kipling wrote his classic poem "If". In his poem, he encourages his readers to ponder numerous life situations that could come to fruition based on one's ability to negotiate the temptations and vicissitudes (the ups and downs) of life. After reading and contemplating Kipling's poem, I am left with the impression that Kipling squarely places the responsibility on the shoulders of the person who experiences these possibilities to determine how the life situations are handled. This may be the poet's intention; however, I would prefer that readers of this classic poem take another approach to successfully navigating the sometimes tortuous roads of life.

I maintain that God makes a way for those human beings who have a personal relationship with Him through the acceptance of the perfect sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. God directs His people "if" they choose to follow the way He has established. The Way is Jesus Christ as John recorded in John 14:6 where Jesus tells his disciples and Thomas specifically, "I am the way, the truth, and the life..." (KJV) Those of us who have a "saving" relationship with Jesus Christ will accept Jesus as "The Way", and therefore, learn to recognize the benefits and consequences of the "ifs" we encounter in our lives.

Kipling suggests that as human beings we have the ability within ourselves to decipher the "ifs." The decisions we make concerning the "ifs" in our lives are generally temporary solutions to generally temporary situations. The "ifs" God recommends for humanity have eternal consequences.

"If" is a small word, however, it can mean the difference between obedience and disobedience, between success and failure."

Scriptural examples found in our Bible provide life-changing solutions to the "ifs" of life that will be for our good or for our detriment.

- II Chronicles 7:14 describes how God will bless His people, the people of Israel, "if" they will humble themselves and are obedient to His instructions: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (KJV)
- John 14:23 relates to us how we can make the correct decisions when faced with the "ifs" of our lives. When we love Jesus, we have the blessing of divine fellowship with Him: "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (KJV)
- A decision to follow our own way of thinking when faced with an "if" situation in our lives can lead to disobedience to God. The people of Israel experienced this as we see recorded in I Samuel 12:15, "But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers." (KJV)

"If" is a small word, however, it can mean the difference between obedience and disobedience, between success and failure. Daily, we are tempted to rely on our own wisdom to guide us as we come to points in our lives when decisions must be made to determine the benefits or consequences of "if" I do this, or "if" I do that. No matter how tempting the situation may present itself, we are the wiser to ask God for His guidance rather than follow the recommendation of the author of the poem "If". We are God's people, and we must let God show us how to correctly encounter our "ifs".

 **FEATURED INTERVIEW**

Deaconess Roxie Hooks, Union Baptist Church Member Since 1959

The conversation, 'IF I Say Hi'.

How many times have you sat in Church and looked around and just wanted to say hello? Starting the conversation with the person sitting next to you in church should not be difficult. We are family; we believe in the same God, we are here for the same reason. I had the opportunity to start the conversation with Deaconess Roxie Hooks by scheduling a Saturday morning breakfast. If you don't know me well you may not know that I really value relationships. So I was excited.

On my way to the restaurant I had hundreds of questions running through my mind which was also clouded by joy because I was going to have one on one time with Deaconess Hooks. Now if you cannot understand why I was excited let me tell you what I was about to receive. I was about to get a glimpse into the history of Union Baptist Church. I was about to hear why Deaconess Hooks decided to become a member of Union Baptist Church in 1959. I was about to find out how she felt about the church today versus the church yesterday. I remember a quote – "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." I was ready to learn about her "ifs" and how she overcame so that I might learn the lesson and not have to experience the trial myself.

I began the conversation by asking her to tell me about an IF in her life. She chuckled and said of course, and this is when I realized what I had been missing out on.

She shared with me her journey to Allentown, to the Union Baptist Church and where she is currently in her life. I listened intently not wanting to miss a single word. During the conversation I experienced numerous emotions; however I left with pride and joy that she wanted to spend time with me. Her story is one of hard work, dedication and a strong belief in the Lord. I pondered how I would have responded if I were in similar situations. Would I have come out thanking God for what he has done for me, as she does?

When I asked about Union Baptist Church's growth, she smiled and said, "The way things have grown is wonderful. Progress is lives being saved. Anytime this can happen it is wonderful." She looks forward to being able to walk into the new sanctuary, "When you grow up you feel like you can venture out."

Deaconess Hooks encouraged me and gave me the lesson: It starts with a conversation and treating people right. With the Lord's help we can walk together into a new building, knowing we can all be together.

So whether you joined Union in 1959 or 2014 we are connected, so let's start the conversation.

"A single conversation across the table with a wise person is worth a month's study of books." Chinese Proverb

Written By Jevata Crawford