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Have an idea, suggestion, compliment or correction? Contact us at info@mpha.com or our Editor at fwardell@bellsouth.net.
mpha.com
**This Is Your Oak Leaf**

Enjoy this issue of The Oak Leaf!

It underscores our commitment to inform our members of important news and events. You can also keep current via www.mpha.com and by asking to join our periodic email list.

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**Newsletter Staff**

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**Your 2021 MPHA Officers & Directors**

**President:** Charlie Welch  
**Vice President:** Sarah Monnin  
**Secretary:** Suzanne Ross  
**Treasurer:** Rick Handford  
**Directors:** John Beard, Emily Bourgeois, Kevin Christmas, Suzanne Coddington, Jane Coghill, Jennifer Jackson, Randy Masters  
**Jack McNeary:** Michael Morley, Kevin Murray, Louise (Weezy) Parsons, Tom Smart, Jenifer Walker, Ferman Wardell, Sydney Warren  
**Presidents Emeritus:** Sadler Barnhardt, Bob Lilien, Pamela May, Joddy Peer, Susan Shaver

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**Introducing our newest MPHA Directors:**

- **Emily Bourgeois**  
  “I joined the board to serve with like-minded people who want to protect what put Myers Park on the map in the first place and have made it a wonderful place to raise a family for over 100 years.”

- **Suzanne Coddington**  
  “I am thrilled to be back in the neighborhood where I grew up…as a native Charlottean, it’s an honor to represent Myers Park by being a member of the Board.”

- **Louise (Weezy) Parsons**  
  “I have lived in Myers Park since ’94—raising 3 wonderful young ladies and watching the neighborhood transform around us. I wanted to be a part of MPHA so that I can help preserve the grandeur and essence of this community as it grows, and maintain John Nolen’s vision of Myers Park.”

- **Tom Smart**  
  “Born and raised in this beautiful city, I would like to help preserve it’s heritage.”

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**Welcome and Thank You!**

Mail form below with payment, or visit www.mpha.com to join online or check your membership status.

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**Help Protect the Unique Beauty of Myers Park**

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**2021 Membership Form**

| Title(s) |  
| Name(s) |  
| Address |  
| Mailing Address (if different than property address) |  
| Phone |  
| E-mail Address(es) |  

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- [ ] MPHA Member: $75
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All three membership options include annual dues  

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- [ ] Tree Fund Donation: $25
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Make checks payable to MPHA and mail to:  
MPHA, PO Box 12733, Charlotte, NC 28220. Thank you!
Greetings MPHA Neighbors,

I hope you and your family are doing well. While we still have work ahead of us battling the pandemic, health care professionals are doing a remarkable job, vaccinating Americans at a healthy clip. The CDC and state of NC have materially adjusted face mask guidelines and a return to normalcy seems closer than ever. Does anyone else have Zoom fatigue?

The economy seems to be gearing up for another Roaring 20’s given all of the pent-up demand. I recall real estate experts last May wondering how someone could sell a house if no one could view it. Today, houses in Charlotte and many other cities are selling like toilet paper was last May; if it is available, buy it and don’t quibble over the price. Limit one per person.

Many Americans have left higher cost cities for good and Myers Park is one of many neighborhoods with increased real estate sales. If you are one of our new neighbors to Myers Park, welcome, I know that you will love living here.

You will find out more about the neighborhood in this newsletter and I would invite you to visit our website (www.mpha.com) to learn more. We would love to have you join as a member. Membership in the Myers Park® Homeowners Association (MPHA) is entirely voluntary, but it drives our efforts to preserve and enhance the historical character of the neighborhood.

In this issue, you will learn more about our inaugural private property tree planting program. We have all noticed the pristine grounds at Whitehall and you will get to meet the person that has been responsible for Whitehall for 35 years.

We don’t endorse political candidates, developers and certainly not religious preferences, but we do think it is helpful to hear from neighborhood leaders. We have had elected officials share thoughts in prior newsletters, although not political ones, and this Oak Leaf features a piece from long time Myers Park resident, Pat McCrory. Brian Speas, a Myers Park resident for four decades and an established developer, shares his thoughts on Myers Park and John Nolen’s profound design. Lastly, James Howell, a prodigious sermonator (it should be a word in the dictionary and James Howell embodies what it means) has been the senior minister at MPUMC for nearly two decades and he always has interesting observations.

Finally, given Governor Cooper’s recent guidelines on outdoor gatherings, we are planning to return to our popular, traditional July 4th celebration again this year. Please check our website and Facebook page for updates.

I have been fortunate enough to meet many of you and hope to meet many more. I can be reached at info@mpha.com; I would love to hear from you.

Best regards,
Charlie Welch
President

From the Editor

I’m pleased to announce the addition to The Oak Leaf staff of fellow MPHA Board Member Sydney Warren as Assistant Editor. Welcome Sydney!

And I hope you noticed the change to our front cover. We have replaced our trusty old White Oak Leaf with the trusty new Willow Oak leaves and made some layout improvements as well. The new Willow Oak leaves are more indicative of Myers Park as Willow Oaks are definitely ubiquitous on almost every block. Enjoy this issue!

– Ferman
MPHA Membership Update
By Sarah Monnin, MPHA Board

The MPHA membership is on track and consistent with previous years, but it’s time to think BIGGER!! To the right is a chart showing first quarter memberships for 2020 versus 2021, and we are dead on for year over year with 533 members thru the first quarter.

Our Goals:
- To increase overall membership to 800 households
- To see all memberships initiated or renewed in the first quarter of each year to help with budgeting
- To shift membership acquisition to 75% online, 25% via manual green cards and checks.

Given the importance of recent topics and programs from the Charlotte 2040 Plan to the MPHA Tree Initiative, we would like to reach, educate and engage with MORE of our neighborhood. Our goal of 800 represents just 1 in 4 households.

In an exciting trend, 55% of memberships this year were initiated/ renewed online, up from 45% last year. While we will continue to offer our traditional green cards and so appreciate your checks, that process remains manually intensive and more costly.

In closing, we are happy to share that the generosity and engagement of our current membership is increasing daily as we see a shift in the type of membership from 2020 to 2021. Basic memberships have decreased slightly (4%) giving way to an increase in Neighborhood Guardians (24% increase from 67 Members March ’20 to 83 members March ’21), Defenders (18% increase) and our John Nolen Society (28% increase). Thank you for the generous and continued support.

For any questions regarding membership, just email info@MPHA.com or visit MPHA.com to join or renew today. You can also check your membership status using the website.

Still wearing shorts
Scott Chapman has been the ultimate Myers Park Postal carrier for a quarter century! He wore shorts every day for 25 years. Pictured with Scott are his wife, Leslie, and his brothers Allen and Mark who flew in to join him for his last walk. We congratulate Scott on his recent retirement!
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Our Fourth of July Parade is on “GO!”

By Jen Walker, MPHA Board

Things have changed quite a bit in the last few weeks as I thought we would be gearing up for another awesome duplicate 2020 Fourth of July car procession parade. What a turnout we had! A long line of every make and model of fully decorated cars, to the huge turnout of neighbors patriotically dressed in front of their houses and on all the corners cheering the procession on. Even though we were only a few months into our lockdown, our parade was a huge success and a much-needed celebration together, even if it was from a distance.

With long-awaited news from the CDC and our Governor, we may now socialize, vaccinated, in outdoor gatherings with no restrictions in numbers, social distancing and no masks! We are bursting with excitement to announce that we will be hosting our annual 2021 4th of July Parade in full color! That means all the bells and whistles that we have enjoyed in our 2018 and 2019 parades and more!

So come gather this year on the front lawn of Queens University around 12:00 noon to pick up trinkets to decorate yourself and bring your mode of transportation (bike, scooter, wagon, shoes, car [see below!]…) The parade, accompanied by our parade show cars, will leave the parking lot about 12:30 pm, led by our own Fire Department Station.

Afterwards, enjoy live music led by a special musical guest. Returning this year will be food and ice cream trucks. And of course, we will have face painting and balloon twisting for all our younger participants—and fun-loving adults, too!

So start planning your festive decorations early. Come dressed in your best Independence Day attire. Decorate your bikes, scooters, wagons and even your pooch! Look out for our MPHA signs that will be displayed all over our neighborhood to remind you of our festive event. A much-needed time to come together as a community and enjoy the beginnings of some normalcy and celebrate our Nations birthday!

Bring your car? You bet! Do you have an interesting vintage car? Or a cool car or convertible? Bring it to our 4th of July Parade Car Show. We’ll have a reserved parking place for you, and you can decorate it and drive it in the parade. Contact Ferman Wardell at fwardell@bellsouth.net or 704-236-5200.
Join 24 Foundation in celebrating 20 years of changing the course of cancer. The twentieth year of 24 Hours of Booty presented by Levine Cancer Institute will take place in Myers Park from 7 p.m. Friday, July 30 to 7 p.m. Saturday, July 31, 2021.

With the announcement by the CDC and Gov. Cooper to lift many COVID-19 restrictions and open up our world, 24 Foundation will be hosting a full in-person ‘Looped’ event on the ‘Booty Loop’ with Queens University of Charlotte serving as the home base for Bootyville.

Safety is a top priority. 24 Foundation will continue working closely with the City of Charlotte, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and Myers Park neighborhood to ensure a successful, safe and fun event for everyone. It recommends that participants be fully vaccinated and that masks be worn when gathering.

24 Foundation will closely monitor the CDC, state and local guidelines, and safety protocols are subject to change. The following protocols for the event are currently in place:

- A checkpoint at packet pick-up and the event on Friday and Saturday for all participants, volunteers and guests to complete a COVID questionnaire and temperature check screening
- Wristbands to indicate that people have cleared the checkpoint
- Procedures to ensure water and food safety

There will also be a multitude of fun and engaging ‘UnLooped’ activities for those not able to travel to the event or who prefer a virtual option. In addition, ‘UnLooped’ participants can create their own 24 Hours of Booty experience in their yard and neighborhood to spark hope for those impacted by cancer. Activities can range from bike riding, running, hiking, yoga, fitness challenges, midnight pizza and luminary displays to chalk art and campouts.

The registration fee for in-person “Loopered” riders and walkers ages 12 and up is $75 and for child riders (ages 8-11) and walkers (ages 4-11) is $50. “UnLoopered” registration fees are $45 for adults and $25 for kids 11 and under. Fundraising minimums will be the same as previous years and more information can be found at 24foundation.org.

Be part of the summer of endless hope to impact those living with cancer. However you choose to celebrate 20 years with 24 Foundation, you’ll be joining a 20-year legacy of providing hope and healing to Charlotte’s cancer community.
In 1978, right out of college, I moved into Villa Hermosa Apartments on Park Road right across from the old Giant Genie grocery store. There was no good place to walk, so I always drove my car to Queens Road, parked off of a side road and took a wonderful stroll through a tree lined neighborhood that I only dreamed of living in.

Ten years later, after interest rates dropped below 10 percent, Ann and I mortgaged our future and bought a 2600 square foot home only a block from where we used to park our car to walk. We still live there today and have watched two generations of neighborhood children grow up in the best designed community in the USA.

The visionary design of Myers Park with winding tree lined streets, sidewalks, no front yard walls, reasonable density, good setbacks and no cul-de-sacs is perfect for transportation flow, walkable communities, our environment, and long-term sustainability.

It is a design which influenced my public service decisions as a mayor for fourteen years for all new development in Charlotte. As a result, sidewalks are now required, tree ordinances enforced, and dead-end roads not allowed.

Now the newer neighborhoods at all income points built after 1995 are better long-term investments than many of those built in the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s. All neighborhoods deserve the Myers Park quality of life that Ann and I have enjoyed for over 30 years.

But now sadly, our city government, through the 2040 plan, is destroying the best laid plans for our neighborhood and our city. Eliminating single family zoning and increasing density outside of transit corridors throughout Charlotte is governmental overreach and social engineering at its worst. It is bad for our environment and it recklessly divides our citizens with false and misleading narratives.

I join efforts to protect the integrity of all neighborhoods, while I proudly plan to take long walks through Myers Park for hopefully many years to come.

Your Neighbor,
Pat McCrory

Who Was John Nolen?

The history of Myers Park begins with its namesake, John Spring Myers, coming into his inheritance in 1869, which included 306 acres of farmland. While Myers built his own country home on the land, he had dreams of transforming the area into a fine suburb. Although Charlotte was growing outward from center city, it would be challenging to convince the town’s leading residents to move to his land far out into the country. Luckily for him, he met a young business tycoon working in the real estate and banking industries named George Stephens that would become his son-in-law and make his suburb a reality.

After establishing partners and investors for the project, Stephens bought the land from Myers a section at a time, paying for each part as lots were sold. To develop the neighborhood design, Stephens brought in his colleague John Nolen, a young landscape architect from Harvard who had been involved in several park design projects in the area. The pair planned for homes tailored to a mix of economical statuses and incorporated shopping and other commercial real estate projects into the neighborhood. Nolen and Stephens also saw educational institutes as a key part of a well-planned community which resulted in the building of Queens College as well as an elementary school nearby.

When it came time to design the streets of Myers Park, Nolen drew curving avenues that followed the topography of the land. The street plan was much more complicated than other neighborhoods, with varying street widths focused on ensuring residents’ privacy and discouraging constant traffic. The design accommodated the trolley so that no resident was further than a two and a half-mile block walk from mass transit to the center of the city. Nolen considered it to be “the premium streetcar suburb of Charlotte.” (For more trolley information, visit: https://www.mpha.com/myers-park-streetcar-waiting-stations-1891)

Nolen said, “Nature led the way.” He forbade fences in front yards as Myers Park residences were to have no fences. Nothing was to disturb the appearance of the Myers Park streets as green parkways. Nolen believed Myers Park was “designed aright from the first and influenced only by the best practice in modern town planning.”
In 1911, Boston landscape architect and town planner John Nolen created the master plan for Myers Park. His vision provided a framework for the region’s leading architects of the day to design distinctive residential and institutional buildings. The combination of thoughtful land planning, integrity of architectural design and purposeful creation of a “sense of place” for the neighborhood is the foundation of what present day residents appreciate about Myers Park. While we are beneficiaries of the collective efforts of these design visionaries, we are also benefactors with a shared responsibility for preserving its legacy both in spirit and thoughtful application of modern-day design practices.

While many elements of the Myers Park early 20th century suburban plan and architecture remain today, much has changed since Nolen’s original vision was implemented. Good change is necessary and can enhance neighborhood character to create a better sense of community and livability. Today, Myers Park residents enjoy a variety of development including institutional (schools, libraries, places of worship), office, retail, restaurants and healthcare. Great neighborhoods need a variety of housing types that range in size and affordability and Myers Park has both single family and low and medium density multi-family housing options. When you add the elements of public transportation, parks and greenspace and ability to walk and bike in the neighborhood, you realize Nolen’s original land use plan has served as a foundation for an ideal neighborhood living experience.

Just as good change to an original land and design plan enhances quality of life, negative change can undermine the best laid plans. As benefactors of what is good about the neighborhood, Myers Park residents can thoughtfully focus on what is needed to preserve the integrity of Nolen’s original planning vision balanced with current day imperatives. If Nolen and his architectural contemporaries were alive today, and we had benefit of seeking their design wisdom and expertise in the present, it would be interesting to hear their perspectives on a range of topics that could influence smart development and good design outcomes in our neighborhood. Some design questions to consider:

- How can today’s housing design support the historical and architectural character of the neighborhood?
- How can a property owner best engage reputable residential, commercial and landscape professionals at an early stage of a project?
- How do we balance the need for development and density with preservation of what is unique and differentiating about our neighborhood?
- Which design elements are most critical to consider before building a new structure or renovating an existing one?
- How can important details like mass, scale, building heights, setbacks from the street and property lines, materials, roof lines, doors and windows add value to the neighborhood character versus detracting from it?

And while fundamental design questions are important, we will all benefit by asking community access, equity and inclusion questions that are more important than ever before:

- How do we better provide access to social capital and focus on neighbors helping neighbors within and beyond the boundary lines of our existing neighborhood?
- How do we include diverse voices in a planning process?
- How can diversity of affordable price points for both home and rental properties enhance the character of our community?

Just as the plan Nolen created over 110 years ago has outlasted his life, our present day actions and intent, from foundational design decisions to concerns about a more inclusive community, will impact property values and community quality of life for generations to come. What will our community legacy be?
Our success is due, in part, to our in-depth knowledge of the Charlotte real estate market, professionalism, patience, and persistence in handling each transaction. Most importantly, we sincerely enjoy what we do as real estate Brokers/Realtors®.

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We are SOLD on Myers Park!
Hello again, Myers Park. This past year has had its fair share of challenges. With that, I hope everyone is doing well and staying healthy. I want to provide an update on crime trends so far in 2021 and a few tips on how we, as a team, can make your neighborhood a little less appealing to those looking to commit crimes.

Most of the crime committed in the Myers Park area is property crime. Overall crime in the area is down compared to the same time last year, but car break-ins are still at the top of the list of crime in your area. And of those car break-ins, the majority are left unlocked. Many of these crimes can be prevented. That is where you all come in.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department can only do so much to promote security in your community. As a resident of Myers Park, you also have a responsibility to help reduce and deter crime in your neighborhood. If you make yourself an easy target by leaving your cars unlocked, those looking to commit crime will return. We need your help to achieve the best results.

A few tips to remember:

- Always lock your doors and secure your windows.
- Never leave valuables in your vehicle (i.e., cell phones, purse, briefcase, backpack, gym bag, cash, loose change, and especially firearms).
- Take your keys, including valet keys; never hide spare keys in or under your vehicle.
- Never leave your vehicle running and unattended.
- Make sure your house is well lit (i.e., outside lights, spotlights, motion lights, etc.).
- Always keep your garage door closed, even while at home or doing yard activities.
- Store bicycles, tools and other such equipment in a locked shed or garage. Do not leave them outside unattended.
- Install an alarm if possible. They are only effective when used.
- Know your neighbors and be involved in your neighborhood.
- Be alert and report suspicious activity to 911 immediately.

I hope these tips are helpful. Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Take care and stay safe,
Officer L. Beimel

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MPHA Tree Initiative:
A Panoply of New Trees for Our Canopy!
By Charlie Welch, MPHA President

We just completed our inaugural Private Property Tree Planting Program and it was a huge success. Thank you to those that participated, either by purchasing a tree or making a donation to the Jack McNeary Tree Fund. We were able to plant 60 ball and burlap oak trees on private property as well as in the City right of way (ROW). The trees are 10+ feet tall, sprouting a panoply of green leaves and are on their way to enhancing our canopy.

Combined with the City planting 40 trees in the ROW, that means we planted 100 trees this winter. In the past 3 years we have now planted over 200 trees in Myers Park. We would like to especially thank Jamie Deese, municipal arborist specialist with the City of Charlotte, for helping us develop the initial private property planting program. Jamie has been our local arborist for years and has always been responsive and very supportive. With Jamie’s help, we were able to offer specimen quality trees, installed, and were able to take advantage of the City of Charlotte’s negotiated pricing. Metrolina Landscape installs the trees and worked closely with homeowners and the MPHA. Many of you may have seen their trucks and crews throughout the neighborhood installing and watering the past couple of months.

We would also like to thank the Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department for providing substantial assistance at Edgehill Park. Edgehill Park used to look like a forest, but it has been decimated in recent years with meaningful tree loss due to storms and age. Tree installation is by far the biggest cost component, roughly twice the cost of the tree, and the County graciously agreed to install five trees at Edgehill Park this winter with County crews. The County planted five trees—four Oaks and one Magnolia—and they look great. Go check them out. We hope to plant more next year at Edgehill and elsewhere (Squirrel Park?).

We have attempted to develop a similar planting partnership with the City and we will keep trying. Imagine the impact we could have if the City would agree to install some trees? Not just in Myers Park, but throughout Charlotte as the tree canopy loss is a citywide issue.

Trees are powerhouses for cleaning the air, providing shade, reducing energy costs, cooling our environment, minimizing soil erosion, etc. not to mention making the neighborhood beautiful. We are pleased with the trees that have been planted, but there is more work to be done. The City’s arborist department is doing an admirable job, but it is significantly underfunded. Not only does it not have enough funding for new trees, but it isn’t able to maintain existing trees. Proper maintenance is important as it can extend the lives of trees and minimize tree loss during storms.

It has been widely reported that Charlotte is losing its tree canopy. A 2018 study based on 2015 data revealed that our canopy has declined from 49% to 45% city wide. Given the loss of trees due to storms, old age, development as well as property owners personal preferences, we are still losing ground. For starters, perhaps the City would consider updating the 2018 study. Or just look up at our former forest that now has as many openings as it does shade. We would also like to see funding increased significantly which would benefit everyone.

As noted in the previous Oak Leaf, Charlotte ranks in the bottom decile for tree funding among comparable cities. Or, more simply put, last. We are encouraging City Council to prioritize our tree canopy by significantly increasing funding for both maintenance and planting new trees in the FY22 budget. We may ask for your help again to encourage City Council members to take bold action to reverse the tree canopy decline. The City doesn’t have unlimited resources and there are many competing projects, but preserving the canopy is one of the few that benefit everyone in Charlotte.

Stay tuned, as you will certainly hear more from us regarding our commitment to preserve and enhance our tree canopy. We hope to repeat the private property planting program next winter and will distribute information this fall. The loss of our tree canopy is a top issue among residents, and we are continuing to think of ways that we can make a difference. John Nolen envisioned this wonderful cathedral of trees a century ago and we are determined to continue his legacy.
Myers Park Homeowners Association
2020 Right-of-Way Tree Campaign

Edgehill Park’s New Trees Today:

- Willow Oak (one of two planted)
- White Oak
- Live Oak
- Magnolia, with its first blooms

Thank you, Bruce Smith, for your 35 years of exceptional landscape management in the Whitehall neighborhood and other locations in Myers Park!

- From The Residents of Whitehall
The View from a Myers Park Pulpit
By James Howell, Senior Pastor, Myers Park United Methodist Church

After 18 years at the Methodist Church at Queens and Providence, I can’t decide if leading here is easy, with so many gifted, resourceful people who inhabit our architectural gem of a sanctuary, or if it’s a challenge – with so many people normally in charge of things, and with a building and reputation that can be off-putting to a majority in our city. I love the privilege of pastoring here, just as I loved the privilege of pastoring a little country church and then a poor inner-city church in prior years.

I think a pastoral leader in such a place of privilege requires a pretty firm vision of who we are and what God asks of us. We feel the responsibility to do church with excellence, not merely for us, but for our city and even the world, albeit with the temptation to play noble supremacists, thinking we know what’s best for people we don’t know, or thinking we’ve climbed above others. We have nothing but broken, wounded people with dreams of a life that matters, and making a difference out there.

A generation ago, Charlotteans spoke of “the Myers Park Pulpit Giants.” My father-in-law was one of them! My friends and I who lead now stand on our tiptoes to be as tall as we can. Church isn’t held in such high regard any longer. We have to scrap for our place at the table. We have to be humbler, nimbler, more accessible and inclusive than that previous generation. It’s harder, but way more meaningful now that nobody takes church for granted. Our reach has extended all over the city – a blessing for us probably more than for the city!

The pandemic has posed unique, daunting challenges. Closing down church was way easier than gradually reopening, balancing the giddy delight of the liberated vaccinated with the needs of the most vulnerable among us. I feel like I moved to Idaho last year and am now commuting to Charlotte. We’re figuring it out. We don’t want to “go back.” We want to move forward. What new thing is God asking of church during such a time as this?

I love the statue of Hugh McManaway in front of our building. He’s directing the traffic – after all these years. Churches that lead raise a hand to indicate the way toward God, toward hope in a cynical world, toward compassion in a hard place. He doesn’t point into our church! As we exit we see him pointing us into the real world. That’s where hope happens.
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Ad space may be limited — ads are accepted on a first come, first serve basis with previous advertisers given first right of refusal. First-time advertisers must submit a proposed advertisement. MPHA reserves the right to refuse any advertisement not deemed appropriate. Ad space is limited to no more than 50% of the publication.

For more information or to advertise in The Oak Leaf contact info@mpha.com or the Editor at fwardell@bellsouth.net