



*Paradise United Methodist Church*

## ***THE GREETER***

***December 2022***

### **FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN . . . . .**

I did a "God-brag" at our bi-monthly Northwest District clergy ZOOM meeting the other day. It was the Monday after we had welcomed eight new members into the official fold of Paradise UMC and I bragged about that to the group of pastors who had gathered online. (In case you missed it, those eight are...Annette Stevenson, Larry and Dorothy Joiner, Bob and Valerie Goodman, Scott and Darcy Lang, and Sandra Reeves). Our District Superintendent, David Gilmore, said at the time that it gave him goose bumps to hear that. It does me, too!

We have lots of God-brags to pass along at PUMC, including these eight new members to add to the seven new members from last year. We have several thriving small groups which are doing great work, like the "AMen" men's group, the newly formed "Paradise Rubies" women's group, the Tuesday morning Prayer Group, the Adult Sunday School class, and the PUMC Choir (which, b-t-w, will be performing a Christmas cantata on December 18th).

PUMC is currently involved in several service projects, which include volunteer work at the Smithville and Plattsburg Food Pantries, collecting hats/gloves/scarves for Grace House, and putting together Reverse Advent Boxes for the less fortunate in our community. PUMC also participates in the UMC's Special Sundays where we assist in providing funds for UMC programs around the world.

It gives me goose bumps to God-brag on PUMC because I realize that not all churches are growing in the same way. Most churches in the major denominations are not experiencing growth the way PUMC is or are able to provide the services which we are able to provide. Why? I don't know exactly, but I do know this: it is God who gives this increase. We sow, water, fertilize, weed, and hope to reap, but it is only God who knows how to grow things. Like churches.

The famous and saintly Mother Teresa of Calcutta was asked a similar question late in her life. While many religions and churches were losing members, her followers were growing, and her interviewer asked her why. Mother Teresa answered without hesitation. She said, "I give them Jesus." The reporter pressed on, asking, "Yes, I know, but what strategies have you developed? There must be something else." "I give them Jesus," Mother Teresa said. "There is nothing else."

That kinda sums it up. This holy woman describes and defines the role, the purpose, and the mission of God's church: to present the love of God in real ways, to present Jesus as a human friend, companion, and guide. To do it in word, yes, but equally, if not more so, to do it in action. That's what we're trying to do at PUMC.

Pretty simple, right? Gives me goose bumps.

Blessings on yer noggins! Pastor Rob Ernest

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

The Adult Sunday School group is working on a study by Matt Rawle, "The Heart That Grew Three Sizes, Finding Faith in the Story of the Grinch." When complete, we will be doing a study on "The Angels of Christmas" by Susan Robb. Please join us in person or via Zoom at 9:45a.m. on Sunday mornings.

### **OUTREACH/MISSIONS**

For the last several years we have worked with the Christian Church in Smithville. They have a food pantry that is open once a week to help take care of those who are food insecure. As a church we have a goal of 50 of whatever the collection is for the month. The missions team talks to the pantry to come up with items that are to be collected over the course of the year. Your donations can be left on the table on the far end of the family center near the bathrooms.

The November collection for the Smithville pantry was canned soup. You all are just awesome – we will deliver 105 cans of soup, 10 tubes of toothpaste and 2 bottles of Miracle Whip to the Smithville pantry. Thank you!

We collected \$230 for the Plattsburg Food Pantry.

Reverse Advent boxes

We delivered 5 boxes to the Smithville School District and will distribute the other 13 to families in need throughout the community. Thank you for all who help make a difference in the community.

December collections:

Smithville Food pantry collection is facial tissues. The Plattsburg Food Pantry prefers cash/check and there is a white collection container on the table in the Family Center. \*\*If you prefer to make your donation electronically - use the memo line and put "Plattsburg Food Pantry."

We put up a Christmas tree for your gifts of hats, gloves, mittens, scarves for all ages. We will keep the tree up the month of December in the family center. Please feel free to

put your items on the tree. They will be delivered to Grace House in St. Joseph.

The "pink can" will be out on the back counter of the sanctuary this month. The collection is for our shut-ins. You may put cash or check in the can or you may give electronically through ChurchConnect. Navigate to the "Online Giving" menu and you can make your donation that way. Be sure to use the "memo" line and specify if you'd like your donation to go to a particular collection, such as "pink can" or shut-ins or Plattsburg food pantry.

### **DECEMBER POTLUCK LUNCH**

There will not be a potluck meal this month due to the holidays. We look forward to seeing you at the next one in January!

### **CHURCH COUNCIL**

The council will hold a meeting in December, but discussions are underway on which Sunday it will meet on. As you await further details, please be mindful of any items you would like on the agenda and feel free to forward them to Shay in the interim.

### **CHRISTMAS SERVICES & ACTIVITIES**

The PUMC Choir will be performing their cantata on Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, during the worship service. The Christmas Eve worship service will be held at 7:00p.m. on the 24<sup>th</sup>. There will be no Sunday School or Coffee Time on Christmas Day, and the worship service will be held at its normal time of 11:00a.m.

### **CHARGE CONFERENCE**

The Charge Conference our church will be participating in is scheduled for Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, from 2:00 to 4:00p.m. It is being held at the Woods Chapel UMC in Lee's Summit. Everyone is welcome to attend!

### **CHURCH MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**

Why does the church need "church management software?" What is it? How does it benefit the church and my family? It is a way for the church to keep track of membership information such as addresses, birthdays, and anniversaries (this allows us to make church directories) as well as keep track of the finances, plan worship, keep up with the church calendar and events. ChurchTrac is our new church management software system which features ChurchConnect where you can access addresses, pictures, activities, register for events, link to the website, online giving and access to your giving record. By signing up for ChurchConnect you will be able to access the directory and keep your information up to date. An important note is that you have

total control on what people can see in the app. If you don't want to share your address, birthday or picture, it will not be seen in other people's app.

If you are not interested in signing up for ChurchConnect, please contact Tooti and she can update your information for the directory (and a hardcopy of the directory can be provided for you). You can log in from your smartphone, tablet or computer. Simply type in the search bar: <https://paradiseumc.churchtrac.com> or you can go to your camera and scan this QRCode;



Each individual has access via their email address - just follow the instructions on the screen and create your account. Once you are able to access (you have to be "matched" for security purposes) your account, you can edit your information such as your birthday, whether you want your information included in the directory or not etc. by clicking on the 3 bars in the upper left corner and selecting My Profile from the menu. There will be a banner across the bottom asking if you'd like to add Church Connect to your home screen, I recommend doing this unless you like typing in that long address every time!

The **online giving and giving records are live** and you can donate via your credit card, ACH (directly from your bank account to the church's bank account) text. The most economical way to make your contribution is through ACH (this way costs the church 25 cents vs. 3% with credit card). Please create your account and make sure that your address and birthday are all up to date (you choose what information you'd like shared in the online directory). If you need some help with the process, please reach out to Tooti and she can help you. (816.305.3745)

### **MONTHLY REPORT**

The Monthly Report for November 2022 is as follows:

Beginning Balance:	\$29,826.06
Offering:	
+\$8,987.40	
Expenses:	-\$7,067.00
Final Balance:	\$31,746.46



