



Paradise United Methodist Church

THE GREETER

January 2023

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

All in all, as Old Blue Eyes would say of 2022, "It Was a Very Good Year" for the family of faith known as Paradise United Methodist Church (PUMC). January is the month in which I usually pass along to those who are interested (and many who are not...) the positive accomplishments of the local church's previous year. So here are a few:

PUMC has received eight new members in the past year. Two small groups have sprung up—the AMen men's service group, and the Paradise Rubies women's service group. The Adult Sunday school class is thriving, as is the Tuesday Morning Prayer group and the Choir, having just performed a Christmas cantata. Worship attendance is up, now averaging in the mid-30s, and we have a fantastic livestream product which has substantially added to our online presence through Facebook, YouTube, Sermon.net and our own website. That website b-t-w, www.ComeToParadise.org, has been totally redone and is now capable of accepting online giving.

Finances are in good shape as is giving to local, state, national and worldwide causes. Examples of that are the healthy contributions of winter wear/gear for the Lakota Tribes of South Dakota and the UMC Special Sunday offerings. Mission work continues with volunteers and donations to the Smithville and Plattsburg food pantries, and the Grace House, among others. And, if that weren't enough, the sanctuary has a new coat of paint!

It will be hard to surpass what has been accomplished this year, but we are already working on a few things. ChurchTrac/ChurchConnect is our new tracking and communication software system which will eventually take the place of many of our a la carte systems such as accounting, membership, and record keeping. We are beginning to work with the Smithville Chamber of Commerce on becoming more viable and visible in the local community. I am also anxious to begin the conversation on how to better use the spaces and places with which we have been blessed to their greatest effectiveness and to the glory of God.

The year wasn't without its setbacks. We lost two beautiful souls in Rob Butts and Gary Butler to the Church Triumphant. Our loss was Heaven's gain, and we rejoice in the sure and present knowledge that we will see them again.

Yes, overall, it was a very good year at PUMC! We rejoice in the blessings which are bestowed on us when we work

side by side with the Master in the Kingdom of God. Donna and I are honored to be with you as we embark on what I know will be an even greater year as we commit ourselves to the making of disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world.

Blessings on yer heads!

Pastor Rob Ernest

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Adult Sunday School group is starting a study, "The Angels of Christmas" by Susan Robb. If you would like to join us, please contact Angie at 816-820-1159. She will be happy to get you a book or you can get one from the large table in the Family Center. We will start with Chapter 1 on Sunday, January 8th, at 9:45a.m.

OUTREACH/MISSIONS

I (Tooti) wanted to give you a year end update as well as the monthly update of what PUMC has so generously given to ease the burdens of others who might need some help.

December recap:

We donated 18 Reverse Advent boxes throughout the community;

Collected \$125 for shut-ins in our congregation;

Collected 57 boxes of facial tissues for the Smithville pantry and \$356 for the Plattsburg pantry; and

Collected several hats, scarves, and gloves, which were delivered to Grace House in St. Joseph MO.

Year End Totals:

Smithville Pantry: 179 rolls of paper towels, 135 cans of fruit, 158 cans of meat, 79 boxed meals, 52 boxes of cereal, 1 cake mix, 1 jiffy cornbread mix, 2 bags of beans, 1 bag of potato flakes, 135 cans of vegetables, 3 packages of feminine hygiene products, 104 toothbrushes, 95 tubes of toothpaste, 49 packages of pasta, 47 jars of pasta sauce, 225 rolls of toilet paper, 107 cans of soup and 57 boxes of facial tissues in addition to 2 people at least once a month to volunteer to work at the pantry.

Plattsburg Pantry: \$3047

Various: \$110 to Plattsburg Sr. Center, 5 pair of socks, 34 pair of underwear, 3 t-shirts and \$105 to the Warrior Closet, 57 Valentine bags for Plattsburg Care Center, \$275 for UMCOR flood buckets, \$1133 UMCOR Ukraine, \$250 Noyes home, \$140 Plattsburg Meals on Wheels, \$275 Toy

Store at Grace Community Church, 12 people worked 4 hours at A Turning Point, \$618 split between Plattsburg & Smithville Meals on Wheels, \$325 Paradise Cemetery, \$132 blankets for Festival of Sharing, \$180 Eagle Heights lunch money, \$157 Patriot Stitchers of Smithville, 18 Reverse Advent Boxes, Box of hats and scarves for Grace House, \$125 for shut ins, and Winter Weather Gear for Lakota Tribe: 56 hats, 8 heavy shirts, 12 jackets, 19 coats, 9 gloves, 3 scarves, 2 cowls, 2 socks, 2 insulated undershirt, 1 insulated pair of underpants, 4 headbands, 1 pants/shell and 2 vests, as well as \$547 in cash to purchase winter weather gear for Lakota tribe.

For January we will be collecting paper towels for the Smithville Pantry and monetary donations for the Plattsburg Senior Center in the "pink can" at the back of the sanctuary.

Thank you for your generous giving. You have made a mark on the community.

AMEN GROUP & PARADISE RUBIES

The AMen service group is scheduled to meet on Saturday, January 7th, at 8:00a.m. Marty will be leading the group and Scott will provide the devotional.

The Paradise Rubies will meet the same day at 10:00a.m. Since Tammy and Dan will be absent that day, Angie will be leading the meeting.

JANUARY POTLUCK LUNCH

There will be a Potluck luncheon on Sunday, January 22nd, at noon, right after church. Please join us and bring a friend or neighbor!

CHARGE CONFERENCE

The Charge Conference our church will be participating in is scheduled for Sunday, January 22nd, 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)

