

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

It feels very strange to be typing those numbers, "2026," but here we go into another new year! With it will undoubtedly come new challenges and rewards, but first let's look at the year that was 2025 at Paradise United Methodist Church.

We didn't start off very well as we lost Donna's mom, Lena Byler, to cancer in January. Two others of our flock also went on to the Church Triumphant: Gus Baker in April, and Spencer Habben in December.

On the positive side of things, we gained eight new members, which included one through baptism—a first for our tenure here! And, we had one wedding and one marriage proposal! Our small groups of AMen, Rubies, Adult Sunday School are thriving, and, although we didn't quite make it to my self-imposed goal of 40 in average weekly worship attendance, we got very close with 39.3!

PUMC is a financially healthy church with no outstanding debt. A silent fund-raising campaign is underway to replace the roof as soon as possible as continual upgrades are made to the physical complex. What continues to be amazing is the generous outpouring of dollars and volunteers from PUMC's membership to the food pantries in Smithville, Plattsburg, and now Trimble, as well as A Turning Point in Gladstone, and Valor Ranch in Lawson. We also have a tithing habit of paying our Conference apportionments ahead of time (usually in January) and supporting the Six Special Giving Sundays of the UMC with substantial contributions.

One of my goals this year was to start a youth program, and with the PUMC Council's guidance and assistance, that is coming to fruition! In December ('25), we offered the new position of PUMC Youth Leader to Erin Clouse of Liberty (the daughter of Liberty UMC pastor, Steve Clouse). She will begin the process soon of setting up a weekly UMYF (United Methodist Youth Fellowship) for our 6th-12th graders. We are very excited about that!

And so, we turn the page into 2026 (it still doesn't look right...). Even though I will be your pastor for only half the year, with God's help it will be one of continued discipleship and fruitfulness, if we make it all for the glory of God. Donna and I would like to thank you for the generous Christmas bonus, and for your many gifts of food, candy, SOCKS and HATS this past Christmas season and throughout the year. Y'all are a delight and a blessing to us!

Blessings on yer noggins!

Pastor Rob

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Adult Sunday School group is working on "Parables from the Back Side" by J. Ellsworth Kalas. If you would like to join us at 9:45 Sunday mornings, please contact Angie.

## JANUARY POTLUCK

The next Potluck is January 25th immediately following the worship service. We hope to see you there!

## PARADISE RUBIES

The Rubies will be meeting at the church at 10:00a.m. on Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup>. The devotional will focus on women in the bible and Valerie has a book, "Wonder Women of the Bible." So let her know if you'd like to pick a woman to tell the group about.

Following the devotional, the group will take an outing to Crave Mediterranean Grill in Liberty. If you haven't already, please RSVP to Valerie in case she needs to make reservations.

Looking forward to February, we discussed having a healthcare guest come and talk to us about women's health (maybe as we age!!). Is there anyone willing to line up a speaker for us?

## OUTREACH/MISSIONS

As we approach the end of 2025 and begin compiling numbers for reports that are presented to the district and state conference, I find myself astonished with the amount of money and items that have been collected and distributed to folks who just need a hand to reach out and show God's endless love. Thank you, PUMC! You are so generous.

## Year End Totals

**Smithville Food Pantry:** Paper Towels 194 Rolls, Canned Fruit: 79 cans, Fruit Cups: 36, Canned Meat 134, Toilet Tissue: 216 rolls, Boxed Meals: 102, Facial Tissue: 95 boxes, Regular Size Boxes of Cereal: 93, Canned Veg (no corn/gr beans): 117 cans, Toothbrushes: 142, Mouthwash: 5, Floss: 5, Toothpaste: 62, Cash: 226.05, Pasta: 74, Pasta Sauce: 72, Quinoa: 1, Coffee/Tea/Hot Choc - individual: 32, Coffee 2#: 1, Soup 132 cans, Laundry Strips: 120 loads

**Costco Pickup for ATP:** 450 hours

**Trimble Food Pantry:** Hundreds of pounds of chips, cookies, crackers, hundreds of dozens of eggs, carrots

**Monetary (formerly known as Pink Can):** \$4786.84 (Shut Ins, Valor Ranch, Fishes & Loaves, Paradise Cemetery, Meals on Wheels Smithville & Plattsburg, UMCOR Cleaning Buckets, Holiday Gift Cards to School District & Housing Authority, Festival of Sharing)

**UMCOR Special Offerings:** Human Relations \$286, UMCOR Sunday \$412.05, Native American \$280, Peace with Justice \$270.55, World Communion Sunday \$160, UMCOR \$51.80.

**Sunday School Collection:** \$1710 (CA Wildfires & Area Families in need of a little help)

**Plattsburg Food Pantry:** \$1830

**Trimble Food Pantry:** \$2567.90 and men's coats

**AMen & Rubies:** Totals to come

**Noyes Home:** \$250

**A Turning Point:** 2 visits to assist in the Saturday Food Pantry

**Fishes & Loaves:** 4 meals to feed 50-60, hats, scarves and gloves that have not been counted and several bags of cold weather gear and clothing.

The generosity of this church is amazing. The above list is incomplete, not intentionally but because this church is better about helping when someone needs

help than reporting it. There are so many hours of service that are not included and many groups and individuals that have received help because they just needed a little help. Thank you so very much to the missions team for heading up collections and getting things distributed.

## January Missions Collections:

Smithville Pantry: Paper Towels

Trimble Food Pantry

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

We've had our first snow of the season! Please remember if the weather isn't good, to check the local TV stations and Facebook to make sure Sunday School and/or worship hasn't been cancelled. Also make sure your cell phone number is in ChurchTrac (see Tooti) as we are set up to send text messages. If you would prefer us to call you, then please contact Angie to make those arrangements.

## CHURCH CONNECT APP

ChurchTrac, our church management software, has a new app, Church Connect, available through the Google Play Store or Apple App Store or you can ask Tooti to share via a QR code that you scan with your phone's camera. You can manage your giving, look at your giving history, link on the "media" to go to the online service or Pastor Rob's podcast, look up addresses of members who've given their permission for the address to be visible to PUMC approved folks, keep up with events and sign up for events, view the bulletin every week, mark your attendance, create and share prayer requests with Pastor Rob and/or the prayer team as well as other handy things for reference.

## MONTHLY REPORT

The monthly report for December 2025 is as follows:

Beginning Balance:	\$44,293.45
General Offerings:	+\$13,447.89
Capital Improvement:	+\$7,763.55
Expenses:	-\$6,142.15
Final Balance:	\$59,362.74

