

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

One of the most blessed things that has ever happened to me was when I happened to be born and baptized into The United Methodist Church (UMC). The UMC has been blessed with people who love Jesus Christ and his message of peace, love and justice for all humankind.

Even so, as a highly diverse people, we don't always agree on how to understand or practice this message. The founder of this church, John Wesley, knew that, and in fact is attributed to having coined the phrase, "we will agree to disagree".

We are blessed in that we are taught that it's okay to wrestle with difficult scripture and issues, even to question God, because God is big enough to handle all of our questioning. We are blessed that we have a method for addressing any issue. We call it the Wesleyan quadrilateral whereby we may filter difficult issues first through scripture and then through our own experience, tradition and reason (otherwise known as common sense).

God has blessed us by creating us in God's image and likeness which includes the ultimate blessing of free will. This is one of greatest things about the UMC--we do not blindly follow a set standard of creeds and doctrines, but in fact are encouraged to think for ourselves and question what God has done and is doing.

We continue to agree on the essentials, which include the knowledge that Jesus Christ was incarnated to show us how to live, died for our sins, and was resurrected so that we might live eternally through his abundant grace. We are all of one mind on that.

One area in which we are not of one mind is in our national politics. Even in our own little church, there are dividing lines of left and right, liberal and conservative, Democrat and Republican (and maybe even a few Independents!). This polarization has become so invasive that we sometimes don't understand how the "other side" can be the way they are. Hate has become the go-to sentiment when one faction confronts the other. Some people believe it is hate like this which led Jesus to the cross, but that's not true.

Love is what put Jesus on the cross. And it's love that will lead us to unity.

That's why Paradise UMC will continue to talk about God's love for ALL people and of Jesus' sacrifice for ALL humankind. We will continue to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless and stand up for the marginalized around us through all the various resources we have.

No, United Methodists do not always agree politically, and yet we agree fully that we must continue to preach and teach about the hope available to all through a relationship with Jesus Christ. This is the Wesleyan way.

Here's my advice, straight from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ: don't be afraid. God's got this.

Here's what we can do: continue our mission of making disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world, love God with everything we have, love our neighbors as Jesus loves us and them, and hold each other in prayer during this time.

Blessings on yer heads! Pastor Rob

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Please join us Sunday mornings at 0945 for the Adult Study group, there is always room for more! We are working on "An Unlikely Lent, Extraordinary People of the Easter Story" by Rachel Billups.

PARADISE RUBIES

The Rubies will meet on Saturday, March 7th. They plan to give the church a good spring cleaning in preparation for Easter.

MARCH POTLUCK

The next Potluck Lunch Sunday is March 22nd following the worship service. Bring a dish and a friend for some great fellowship!

CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council will meet next on Sunday, March 29th, immediately following the worship service. Details regarding the agenda will be sent out closer to the date.

HOLY WEEK

Holy Week seems like it's just around the corner, so we thought we'd let everyone know the schedule. Be sure

to mark your calendars as we wouldn't want you to miss out on anything!

Special services will be held on Maundy Thursday (April 2nd) and Good Friday (April 3rd) at 6:30p.m. Our Sunday Easter service will be held at its normal time of 11:00a.m. Plans are underway to do something special for the kiddos on Easter so stay tuned for more details on that!

OUTREACH/MISSIONS

Your continued support of our missions collections, as well as things you do outside the church for others, is so much appreciated.

February Missions Collections

Smithville Pantry: canned fruit – 56 fruit cups & 25 cans of fruit; apple sauce 68 cups and 3 large jars; 6 rolls of paper towels & 6 large cans of soup

Plattsburg Food Pantry \$215;

Fishes & Loaves \$255;

Valor Ranch \$50;

Trimble Food Pantry \$170;

March Collections

Smithville Pantry - Canned Meat

Monetary – UMCOR Cleaning Buckets

Trimble Food Pantry - monetary

Unhoused Meals

We have again committed to providing meals to Scott & Darcy's Fishes & Loaves Ministry to serve to unhoused people. Tooti & Angie will be providing a meal in the first quarter and the Howards will provide a meal in May. We are looking for volunteers for the months of August & December. Please let Tracy Howard know if you would like to provide meals.

CHURCH MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

As mentioned in previous articles, we use a church management software platform called ChurchTrac. It has an app that you can use to do your online giving

(and get your statement anytime!), see upcoming events, watch the livestream/get the bulletin as well as other things like submit prayer requests. We also have the ability to send out text messages if you have your cell number in the ChurchTrac software - you can see Tooti to update or do that in the app.

Last month we were assigned a phone number that those text messages would be coming from (816.357.9047). Well, that phone number has been changed. Please update the church texting phone number to be 1.833.738.3045. This is NOT a change in the church's phone number - only the number that text messages from the church will come from. So, in the event of church cancellation due to inclement weather a message would come from that number.

NEW DOORS

We have new commercial doors in the family center and the basement. There will be a new one installed in the back of the family center (by the water fountain and bathrooms) once it comes in. The doors will seal better and cut our energy bills as well as reduce the rodent issue.

MONTHLY REPORT

The monthly report for February 2026 is as follows:

Beginning Balance:	\$64,883.32
General Offerings:	+\$5,904.50
Capital Improvement:	+\$907.50
Expenses:	-\$12,096.64
Final Balance:	\$59,598.68