

East Nelson Church

July 1, 2026

Volume 23: Issue 7

Pastoral Letter July 2026

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Summer is singing along! Are the days passing slowly, or more quickly than expected? Different phases of life bring different tempos of experience. One thing we all hold in common is a need to ground ourselves and our faith in gratitude.

There's a great song called 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord) by Matt Redman, based on Psalm 103. These are words of gratitude for all that God has done—forgiving, healing, showing love and mercy, renewing youthful vigor, and working justice for the oppressed. I pair that title with a line from my sermon June 28...that we can come up with a million reasons to say “no” or “maybe later” to God.

I write this in anticipation of our July 4 celebrations, always a summer highlight, a time to exhale, to feel the love of a country that is glorious, even in its imperfections. We express deep gratitude for the freedoms we claim in this country, even as we acknowledge ongoing work toward freedom and justice.

As the summer unfolds, I hope you'll all rehearse 10,000 reasons to bless the Lord, taking time for gratitude.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Michelle



Prayer for July

Loving God, we are not dreaming.
You are in this place.
Your grace passes between this world
and your heart.
We open ourselves to the mystery of your
presence.

- Steve Garnaas-Holmes, unfoldinglight.net

How to get ahold of Pastor Michelle:

Meetings by appointment—in person Monday/Tuesday, via zoom or phone other days.

Please plan with me, and plan ahead! Sometimes it makes sense for me to sit in the office and wait for things to happen, but more often, that is the least effective use of my time. Scheduling meetings assures that each person gets the time they need, without having to wait.

Email is always appreciated: pastormvallier@outlook.com.

Text and phone 9 am – 9 pm Thursday – Tuesday

(If it's hard to remember the exact time, shoot for middle of the day!)

Pastor's Sabbath is Wednesday, please do not call or text.

*****In the case of pastoral care emergencies, please call or text 24/7*****

(What is a "pastoral care emergency?" *A life-threatening situation for you or an immediate family member, especially one in which you need immediate prayers or presence.*)

A Message From Gloria Cole

Life is a lot like a spice rack. We shelve our experiences like spices. Some make so much sense – like salt and pepper. We use them often, clearly recognizing what seems good. Other experiences seem to go wrong, sometimes we go years never understanding why we had them.

But then, in a single moment, the recipe our life calls for a little change, and suddenly it all makes sense. That experiences we once thought was a mistake became the very one that counts.

Is there a season in your life that you often wonder about? You may have had a failure or waste!

Take these spices (experiences) and use them carefully and wisely. Remember that God will work all things out because he loves you, and you love Him!

Peace, Love, and Joy,

- Gloria



July Missions

Miracle Sunday Campaign

Thank you for supporting the scholarship Miracle Sunday Campaign – we donated \$3,490.00.

Cedar Springs Community Food Pantry

Saturday, June 20 was the big day!!! A special thank you to everyone that helped the pantry out by either buying “Simply Give” cards at the Cedar Springs Meijer Store that day or had someone buy them for you. I will let you know how well the April to July campaign went as soon as I get the figures. Do not forget to save us your egg cartons - we recycle them. If your vegetable garden is producing more than you can use this summer - please consider donating it to the pantry.

Assure Women's Center

Saturday, June 20 was also a big day for the Assure Women's Center. The Life walk that was held that day was their biggest fund raiser of the year. The monies collected on that day go to support their day-to-day operations. Over \$25,000 was collected. As of the submission of this article, they had not yet totaled what the “Baby Bottle Blessing” bottles brought in. (I dropped off 7 bottles). We will always have bottles for you to fill with your loose change to add to the day-to-day work of Assure. Thank you for helping this special organization. I will let you know about their future building plans as I receive them.

Covenant Community Support

As we get busy with all our summer plans please don't forget about the families that are torn apart and unable to be together. The Covenant Community UM Church is asking for our prayers as they support ICE detainees when they are released from the North Lake Processing Center in Lake County to go back home. But, before they get released, they really could use notes of encouragement – The detainees do not get to see the original card, just a copy of the words so just a note on a plain piece of paper with words of encouragement can mean so much to someone far away from home.

Soles4Souls

Thank you for all the new and gently used shoes you have already dropped off at the church – I have moved them along. (The classroom where they are being stored is starting to smell like a locker room.) Check out Soles4Souls website if you have not done so already. Then clean out a closet of the decent shoes that you don't wear – the ones not in style anymore, don't fit, never fit, didn't like them after you got them, heels too high, running shoes with not enough support (so were replaced but are still good) – etc. to support them. We are still a far cry from the 1,000 pairs of shoes that is our community goal so if your closet has been cleaned out – talk to your friends and neighbors. The more, new and gently used shoes we collect and move on, the more stay out of the landfills. Bring the shoes to church. I'll continue to move them on.

***Sleep In Heavenly Peace*★**

Save the date Saturday 9/12 – Bed Build here in the parking lot.

Advent Homeless Care Bags

There are still a lot of homeless care bags on the mission table – please take some – keep them in your car and then bless someone with it.

Missions Continued

Midwest Missions

Midwest Missions is looking for school supplies that did not get used but are still good. Spread the word to your families – Before they toss those backpacks, half used notebook, pencils that still write, crayons, rulers and scissors that will be replace for next school year, bring them to church. These unused school supplies can be used in other countries where neither the teachers nor the children have any supplies. If you missed the end of school year backpack clean out – check out this coming year's specials – I've already seen the signs in the stores. There is a box on the mission table for school supplies. (The supplies currently in the box I found at a garage sale).

-Sarah Zachow your Mission Chairperson



By grace we are forgiven: Justifying grace– Condensed from <https://www.umc.org/en/content/by-grace-we-are-forgiven-justifying-grace>

Part of our 3-story series, [The Wesleyan Concept of Grace](#).

“Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.” Many United Methodists know John Newton’s words so well that we can sing more than one verse of this great hymn from memory. We may be a little fuzzy, however, on the [concept of grace](#).

United Methodists often sing about God’s justifying grace using the words of John Newton’s “Amazing Grace.” Photo is hosted at the U.S. Library of Congress, Public domain, via [Wikimedia Commons](#).

Newton’s lyrics echo those of scripture, like [Ephesians 2:8](#), “You are saved by God’s grace because of your faith. This salvation is God’s gift.” Both the Apostle Paul and the hymn writer teach us that our salvation is not something we earn or deserve. It comes to us because of God’s great love for us.

[John Wesley](#), the founder of the [Methodist movement](#), preached and wrote often about the amazing grace of God that leads us into renewed relationship with God.

The gift of God

The Rev. Matt O’Reilly, pastor of St. Mark United Methodist Church, Mobile, Alabama, wants United Methodists to know that when we speak of the grace of God, we are not talking about a substance. It is instead a description of God at work in our lives.

“Grace is primarily about how God relates to us,” O’Reilly teaches, “not based on our merit, but based on God’s resolve and love for creatures made in God’s image.”

“Human effort does not play any role,” shares the Rev. Nday Bondo Mwanabute, professor of theology at [Africa University](#), Mutare, Zimbabwe. “All that is required from human beings is to avail themselves to receive everything from God by faith.”

Wesley taught that our entire spiritual lives are an act of God’s grace. He names at least three periods in our spiritual development and the ways God’s grace is at work during those times—[prevenient grace, justifying grace, and sanctifying grace](#). It may sound like he is talking about three different graces, but that is not the case.

“The issue is timing,” O’Reilly explains, “not so much different stuff.”

Justifying grace: God making things right

The grace with which we are most familiar is what Wesley called justifying grace.

The Bible tells us, "All have sinned and fall short of God's glory" (Romans 3:23). Try as we might, we cannot be good enough. We need God to make things right between us, to justify us.

"Justification is another word for pardon," John Wesley writes in a sermon called [The Scripture Way of Salvation](#). "It is the forgiveness of all our sins; and, what is necessarily implied therein, our acceptance with God."

The Rev. Gary Henderson of United Methodist Communications uses an illustration from our word processors to help us understand what it means to be justified.

"I'm typing and the words and the lines are all over the page... and it looks like a mess," Henderson begins. "With a keystroke or two, I can bring it all together and order it and align it. They call it *justifying* to the left, to the right, or to the center... Sometimes it seems as though our lives are in pieces. We need a sense of order."

When we are justified, we are made right with God. Our sins are forgiven and God begins the process of lining our lives up to God's original design for us.

We are created in God's image, but that image is distorted by sin. By God's grace, through faith, we receive forgiveness. All of this is God's gift to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

A monument on Aldersgate Street, London, remembers John Wesley's words, "He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Photo by Joe Iovino, United Methodist Communications.

"Justifying faith implies, not only a divine evidence or conviction that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,'" Wesley writes in another sermon, [Justification by Faith](#), "but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for 'my' sins, that he loved 'me,' and gave himself for 'me.' And at what time soever a sinner thus believes... God justifieth that ungodly one."

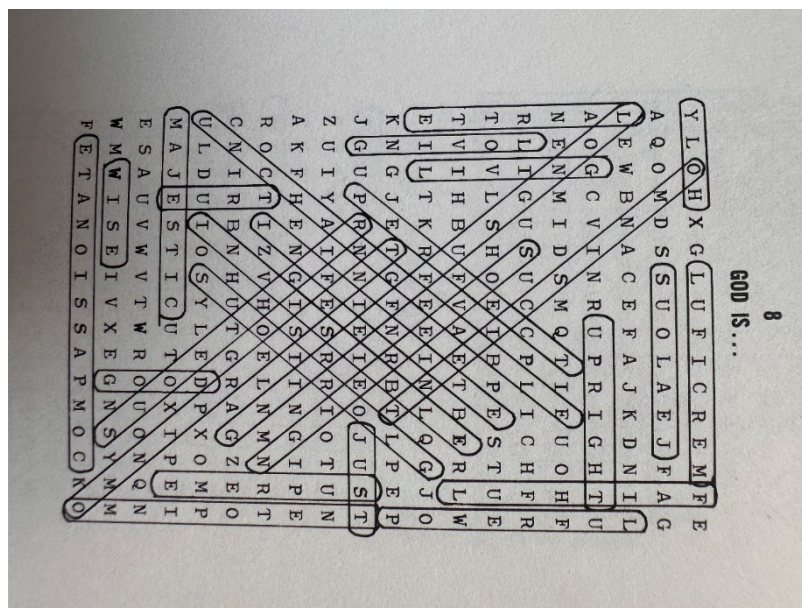
Those familiar with Wesley's recounting of his [Aldersgate experience](#) in his journal, may hear echoes of similar themes in this description of justifying faith.

A DOOR

In a pamphlet titled *The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained*, Wesley likens this moment in our spiritual development to a door. At the moment of justification, we cross the threshold from unbelief to belief. This, however, is not of our own doing.

As Ephesians 2:8 reminds us, salvation is a gift offered to us by our gracious (i.e. grace-filled) God. We do not earn it. Not one of us is worthy of it. We simply receive it in faith.

Getting to the door and growing on the other side of it, are also by God's grace. We will look at these dimensions of grace in the coming weeks.



8

GOD IS...

The adjectives hidden in this puzzle describe the attributes of God as they are revealed in the Bible.

compassionate	merciful
eternal	omnipresent
faithful	omnipotent
glorious	omniscient
good	perfect
holy	powerful
infinite	righteous
invisible	sovereign
jealous	supreme
just	true
living	upright
longsuffering	unchangeable
loving	wise
majestic	

Y	L	O	H	X	G	L	U	F	I	C	R	E	M	F	E
A	Q	O	M	D	S	S	U	O	L	A	E	J	F	A	G
L	E	W	B	N	A	C	E	F	A	J	K	D	N	I	L
A	O	G	C	V	I	N	R	U	P	R	I	G	H	T	U
N	E	N	M	I	D	S	M	Q	T	I	E	U	O	H	F
R	L	I	G	U	S	U	C	C	P	L	I	C	H	F	R
E	O	V	L	S	H	O	E	I	B	P	E	S	T	U	E
T	V	I	H	B	U	F	V	A	E	T	B	E	R	L	W
E	I	L	T	K	R	F	E	E	I	N	L	Q	G	J	O
K	N	G	J	E	T	G	F	N	R	B	T	L	P	E	P
J	G	U	P	R	N	N	I	E	I	E	O	J	U	S	T
Z	U	I	Y	A	I	F	E	S	R	R	I	O	T	U	N
A	K	F	H	E	N	G	I	S	I	I	N	G	I	P	E
R	O	C	T	I	Z	V	H	O	E	L	N	M	N	R	T
C	N	I	R	B	N	H	U	T	G	R	A	G	Z	E	O
U	L	D	U	I	O	S	Y	L	E	D	P	X	O	M	P
M	A	J	E	S	T	I	C	U	T	O	X	I	P	E	I
E	S	A	U	V	W	V	T	W	R	O	U	O	N	Q	N
W	M	W	I	S	E	I	V	X	E	G	N	S	Y	M	M
F	E	T	A	N	O	I	S	S	A	P	M	O	C	K	O

Sat



AA:
Saturday's at 10:00am

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The East Nelson Administrative Board at its, 7/13 4:30 PM meeting, will be addressing the following 2 questions as they talk about memorial monies and do we need a new church mission statement and would like your input:

- 1.) As you walk around the building do you see a need for something that will improve the accessibility, comfort or looks of East Nelson?
- 2.) What does East Nelson mean to you?

Please write down your answers and give them to a board member.

Thank you,

Sarah Zachow, EN AD Board Chairperson



Remember our shut-ins:

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Prayer List:

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



*Names will remain on the prayer list for 1 month unless notified. Prayer chain contact Caroline Bartlette at deadend7501@sbcglobal.net

Church Office Hours

Kae-Leigh will be in office every Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9:00am – 2:00pm.

☎ Office Number: 616-799-0738

✉ Email: eastnelsonumc@gmail.com eastnelsonumc@yahoo.com WILL become **INACTIVE**

💻 Website: eastnelsonumc.org

📺 Youtube: [@eastnelsonumc8554](https://www.youtube.com/@eastnelsonumc8554)