

ACROSS *the* PEWS

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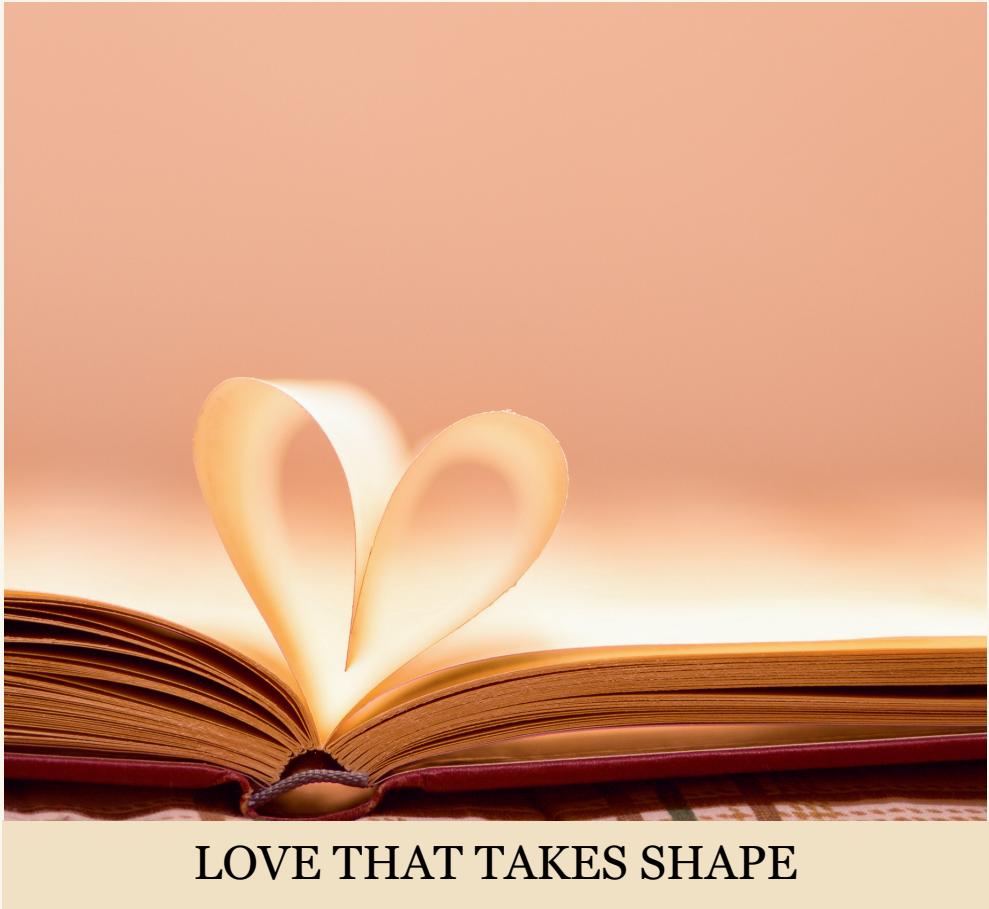
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"Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Colossians 3: 14
NRSVUE



LOVE THAT TAKES SHAPE

- Pastor Eduardo Carillo -

What does love look like? If you ask someone below the age of 10 they'll probably say a hug from parents, family, laughing. If you ask a teenager, secret letters, a new device, maybe ice cream. If you ask me, love looks like dinner at my favorite steak place.

February often arrives wrapped in the language of love; cards, flowers, kind words, and hopeful gestures. And while those things are not unimportant, Scripture reminds us that love is more than a feeling we celebrate; it is a way of life we practice.

LOVE THAT TAKES SHAPE CONTINUED

The apostle Paul writes, “Love is patient; love is kind...” (1 Corinthians 13:4). Notice that love is described not as an idea, but as an action. Love shows up when patience is tested, when kindness costs us something, when forgiveness feels undeserved. This kind of love is not sentimental, it is shaped by the cross and the greatest example is God’s covenant love.

Jesus tells his disciples, “Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (John 13:34). In a world quick to divide, dismiss, and move on, the church is called to love differently. We are invited to listen longer, to assume less, and to remain present even when it would be easier to walk away. This is not easy work, but it is holy work.

February reminds us that God’s love is not seasonal or selective. “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). And having been loved so deeply, we are sent to love boldly.

So this month, may we not only speak of love, but live it, practice it, and risk it, for the sake of Christ and one another, so that when people see it in action they know that’s what love looks like.

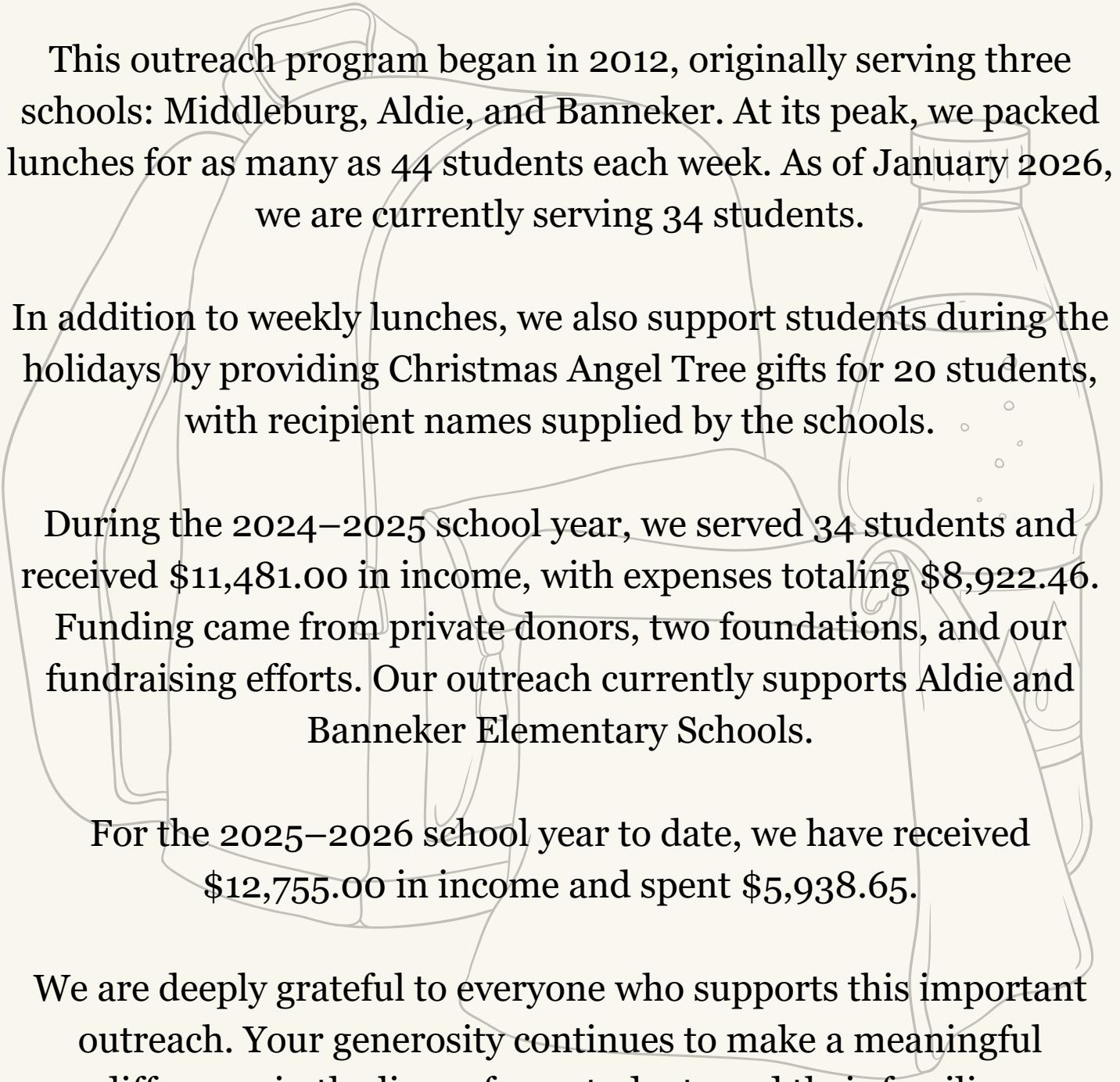
Grace and peace,
Eduardo

ROSCA DE REYES AT RUMC



Thank you to everyone who joined us to celebrate Rosca de Reyes and share in the joy of the season together. It was a gift to gather in fellowship and enjoy the traditional King's Cake generously provided by Pastor Eduardo. Moments like these—around the table, sharing stories and laughter—remind us that faith is lived not only in worship, but in community. We are grateful for this sweet time together and for Pastor Eduardo's hospitality in helping make it possible.

MISSION HIGHLIGHT - BACKPACK BUDDIES (MUMC)



This outreach program began in 2012, originally serving three schools: Middleburg, Aldie, and Banneker. At its peak, we packed lunches for as many as 44 students each week. As of January 2026, we are currently serving 34 students.

In addition to weekly lunches, we also support students during the holidays by providing Christmas Angel Tree gifts for 20 students, with recipient names supplied by the schools.

During the 2024–2025 school year, we served 34 students and received \$11,481.00 in income, with expenses totaling \$8,922.46.

Funding came from private donors, two foundations, and our fundraising efforts. Our outreach currently supports Aldie and Banneker Elementary Schools.

For the 2025–2026 school year to date, we have received \$12,755.00 in income and spent \$5,938.65.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who supports this important outreach. Your generosity continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students and their families.

MISSION HIGHLIGHT - LOCAL MISSION (MUMC)

Our Local Mission outreach has been serving the community since 1983. This ministry is supported through our fundraising efforts, one consistent donor, and several others who give periodically. We assist individuals and families within a five-mile radius of Middleburg, as well as those connected through Windy Hill local projects in The Plains, Marshall, and Middleburg.

In 2025, we received \$8,350.25 in support and spent \$6,392.41 assisting those in need. Funds are used to help pay essential expenses such as electric and water bills, rent, gasoline, medical bills, prescriptions, and limited auto insurance costs for individuals who are unable to meet these obligations at times. No cash assistance is given directly; all payments are made by check to the billing agency after a bill is reviewed.

When bills are excessive, we may contribute a portion of the amount and provide referrals to other organizations that may be able to assist. Ongoing concerns, such as repeated late rent payments, require further review to understand the circumstances and may affect our ability to respond. If available funds are depleted, assistance must pause until additional funds are received.

We are deeply grateful to all who support this outreach. We often receive heartfelt thanks from those who are helped during difficult moments. Scripture reminds us to sow our seeds by caring for strangers, orphans, and widows, and Jesus teaches us that when we serve “the least of these,” we are serving Him.

Thank you for your continued generosity. Together, let us continue to do good.

MISSION HIGHLIGHT - THE FIG LEAF (RUMC)

The Fig Leaf continues to serve individuals and families throughout the surrounding communities, welcoming approximately 1,000 people each year. This ministry exists to offer dignity, care, and practical support to neighbors in need, and the growing number of guests reminds us just how vital this work has become.

As the Fig Leaf grows, we are prayerfully exploring the possibility of expanding into a larger space so we can better meet the needs of those we serve. To take this next step, we need stable community support—especially regularly scheduled volunteers who can commit to consistent hours each week. Reliable volunteer coverage is essential for operating expanded hours and sustaining long-term growth.

We are deeply grateful for everyone who already supports the Fig Leaf through time, donations, and encouragement. Your generosity has helped make this ministry a place of welcome and hope. With continued community involvement, we believe the Fig Leaf can grow to serve even more neighbors with compassion and respect.

Thank you for being part of this important work. Together, we can continue to meet needs and build a stronger, more caring community.

RUMC IN MEMORIAM - LARRY UNDERWOOD



Lawrence Henry Underwood, age 101, was born June 3, 1924, in Washington, DC, and passed away on January 9, 2026, from pneumonia. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather (“Pa-paw”), church member, small business owner, veteran, and faithful servant to his community. His life was marked by deep faith, family devotion, service, and a lifelong love of sports.

Lawrence spent most of his life in Arlington, Virginia, where he owned and operated Underwood Superior Cleaners, located in the historic Underwood Building built by his parents in 1939. A proud Navy veteran, he served during World War II and the Korean War aboard several destroyers, surviving the sinking of the USS Leary and remaining active in veterans’ associations throughout his life.

He married Betty Frances Smith Underwood, and they shared 74 years of marriage until her death in 2020. Lawrence is survived by his three daughters, six grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, extended family, and many friends. The family extends heartfelt thanks to his caregivers, Teresa Boyle and Sandra Thomas, for their loving care and companionship in his final years.

A memorial service will be held **February 21st, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.** at Rectortown United Methodist Church, with a reception to follow.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Rectortown United Methodist Church.

INTRODUCING MIDDLEBURG METHODIST MAINSTAYS

In this and future newsletters, this series “Middleburg Methodist Mainstays” honors members of the congregation who perform essential services as faithful volunteers in our church. The functions they perform are essential to keeping our church operating smoothly. We owe each a huge thank you for their selfless dedication.



Diana Gregg

Diana has been a member of Middleburg Methodist Church for 46 years and has faithfully served in many roles, including Sunday school teacher and member of the Parish Review Committee. Today, she continues her ministry by caring for the altar—ensuring the vestments reflect the proper liturgical season, candles are refreshed, and acolytes are guided as they bring in and carry out the Light of Christ each Sunday. She also sees to the cleaning of altar linens and sends monthly birthday cards to congregation members.

Diana is retired and lives near town with her husband, Larry. They have two daughters and two teenage grandsons, whom she enjoys cheering on at sporting events. Before retiring, Diana worked for The Chronicle of the Horse in Middleburg for 39 years as advertising manager.

One of the things Diana cherishes most about MUMC is the warmth of the congregation and the care she has received through the years. She was especially touched by the pastoral support she received from Pastor Eduardo during a difficult season this fall.

We give thanks for Diana’s dedication and invite the congregation to join us in celebrating her as a Middleburg Methodist Mainstay.

BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES, MEETINGS

MUMC BIRTHDAYS

Courtney Michels - 2nd

Bill Dunlap - 4TH

Michael Laurenzano - 7th

Carlos Canino - 9th

Gayle Pumphrey - 9th

Caitlyn Haggerty - 15th

Annie Nickelson - 15th

Camila Carrillo - 24th

MUMC ANNIVERSARIES

Theron & Gail May - 12th

MUMC MEETINGS

Admin Council

February 19th at 10:30am.

RUMC BIRTHDAYS

Mila Carrillo - 24th

Lauren Haley - 26th

RUMC ANNIVERSARIES

None

RUMC MEETINGS

Admin Council

February 5th at 7pm.

Worship

February 21th at 10am.

Trustees

February 10th at 6pm.

Fig Leaf

February 20th at 10am.

ASK THE PASTOR



Ask The Pastor



Do you ever find yourself wondering, “*What does the Bible say about this?*” or “*How should we think about that as people of faith?*”

Each month, Pastor Eduardo will respond to questions from our church family and community—big or small—offering answers that are biblically grounded, pastorally inspired, and theologically sound. It’s a way for us to grow in faith together, ask the things that are on our hearts, and engage in open conversation.

Have a question you’d like to see answered? Drop it in the question box at church, email it to the office, or hand it directly to Pastor Eduardo. No question is too simple, and chances are, if you’ve been wondering about something, others have too! See the answer to your questions in the next newsletter!

Have a Question for Pastor Eduardo?

We’d love to hear from you! Use this space to write your question. Drop it in the basket at church, hand it to Pastor, or return it to the office.

My Question:
