

# SPRUCE PINE UMC NEWSLETTER

Volume 10, Issue 4

April 2020

## From the Pastor's Desk...

## Easter Celebration



We're about to leave March, where we have spent most of this Lenten season, and enter into April. That means we are less than 2 weeks away from Easter – that glorious day when we celebrate the risen Christ! This Lenten season has been especially difficult, given the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. As I write this, the sun is shining, and it is nearly 80 degrees outside. There is so much hope as Creation begins its cycle of new life. Yet, as I write this, the state of North Carolina is about to begin a 30-day "Shelter in Place" order to help slow the spread of the virus. This truly is a paradoxical time in which we are living. There is fear. There is hope. There is isolation. There is connection in wonderfully creative ways. We have lost some of our freedoms. We are intentionally choosing to "do no harm" so that more lives can be spared.

**Continued on Page 2**

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*"The mission of  
Spruce Pine United  
Methodist Church is  
to be a  
beacon on a hill  
spreading the Good  
News of Jesus Christ  
through:  
Worship, Fellowship,  
Education, Nurturing  
and Service"*

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## In This Issue

- Pastor Rick's Letter
- April Scriptures
- Communion News
- Other News
- April Calendar / Birthdays / Anniversaries / Thanks

## **FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK**    *Continued from pg. 1*

In the midst of our varying emotions, I wanted to update you on some church-related matters to keep us in the know and connected. First, our North Carolina Bishops, who are following the CDC guidelines for public gatherings, have suggested that all public worship should be on hold until further notice. This, combined with the governor's 30-day "Shelter in Place" order that begins Monday, March 30, means that we will not be gathering for public worship during the month of April, unless things get much better.

What does this mean for Easter? Well...nothing...and a lot. Nothing, in the sense that the day of Easter will come... on April 12...whether we gather together publicly or not. Easter morning will burst forth as heaven, nature, and people sing praises to the fact that Christ is risen indeed, and death does not have the final word in God's story of love that changes everything. A lot, in the sense that we will not be publicly gathering for worship at 11090 Hwy 226 South (or at the Orchard for a sunrise service). And this is painful. This seems wrong...almost disrespectful. And it's okay to feel this way. But, know that we are intentionally choosing to "do no harm" by keeping our physical distance. I recently watched a daily devotion video by Chaplain Tim Drum II of Spartanburg Methodist College. One of the things he noted was that we're keeping our distance so that (fill in your name here) isn't the one to get your grandmother, or anyone, sick. We might be losing some of the things we love to do for a little while, but we must think outside ourselves and towards each other and the greater good of humanity and Creation. Yes, this means giving up the things we love to do, including church on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter. As such, we will continue to offer online worship services that connect us from our homes, outside spaces, or wherever else we are.

Also, we will not do a "formal" flowering of the cross on Easter morning. However, if individuals or families would like to put flowers on the cross, please do so – during the whole month of April – as signs of new life. We are planning to do a formal flowering of the cross at a later date, when the crisis clears, as a celebration of Easter, resurrection, and transformation. In the meantime, Christmas lights have been placed on the cross again to shine the light of God's love and hope to our community. For those wanting to flower the cross, do not worry about the lights. They are LED lights and burn at lower temperatures than regular, incandescent lights. And, the lights should not interfere with adhering flowers to the cross.

Now, what about Communion on Palm Sunday (April 5)? Good question! Together, we will participate in an online Communion service. You can prepare by getting bread or crackers, and juice ready before you begin watching the service. During the Communion portion of the online worship service, I will offer a time of preparation and prayer with my bread and juice. I will bless all of our "breads and cups" and together we will partake of the Lord's Supper. We will do this not only to remember how Christ died for us, but also to remember how Jesus lived for us.

In addition, during Holy Week, I will offer a short devotional-type message on both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. They will be posted on our website [www.sprucpineumc.org](http://www.sprucpineumc.org) and our church Facebook page. By the way, please don't forget to "Like" our Facebook page so that you can get Facebook messages and stay in the know.

As we continue to create online worship services, please send me your prayer requests and praises. We want to offer these as part of the services so that we can stay in prayer together and celebrate with each other. And I know there are things to celebrate; I've heard some great reports from various people as far as successful surgeries, good medical reports, and other unexpected blessings.

Finally, I want to remind us that we will get through this, and we will get through together. Thank you for reaching out to each other during our time of physical distancing. Thank you for checking on those who might need groceries, medicine, or other needs. Thank you for calling, emailing, and sending cards and letters. Thank you for continuing to send in your tithes and offerings through the church website and the mail – because our ministry continues during this chaotic time. Thank you for choosing to "do no harm" by sheltering in place. Thank you for allowing God to move us in creatively loving ways.

And may we keep all of this in mind when this crisis passes. May we continue to love others in creatively beautiful ways. May we reach out to those who need a friend. May we take the time to trust God in sabbath rest. May we make choices for the greater good of humanity and Creation. May we truly be the hands and feet of God, and the crooks of Jesus' elbows as they draw the upper arm and forearm together as we embrace this world in need.

In humble-Easter-celebratory-hopeful-resurrection service with you... Pastor Rick

## Weekly Scriptures

CEB - Common English Bible

### April 5, 2020 - Liturgy of the Palms

- ♦ Matthew 22:1-11
- ♦ Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

### April 5, 2020 - Liturgy of the Passion

- ♦ Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7
- ♦ Psalm 32
- ♦ Romans 5:12-19
- ♦ Matthew 4:1-11

### April 6, 2020 - Monday - Holy Week

- ♦ Isaiah 42:1-9
- ♦ Psalm 36:5-11
- ♦ Hebrews 9:11-15
- ♦ John 12:1-11

### April 7, 2020 - Tuesday - Holy Week

- ♦ Isaiah 49:1-7
- ♦ Psalm 71:1-14
- ♦ 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
- ♦ John 12:20-36

### April 8, 2020 - Wednesday - Holy Week

- ♦ Isaiah 50:4-9a
- ♦ Psalm 70
- ♦ Hebrews 12:1-3
- ♦ John 13:21-32

### April 9, 2020 - Maundy Thursday

- ♦ Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14
- ♦ Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19
- ♦ 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
- ♦ John 13:1-17, 31b-35

### April 10, 2020 - Good Friday

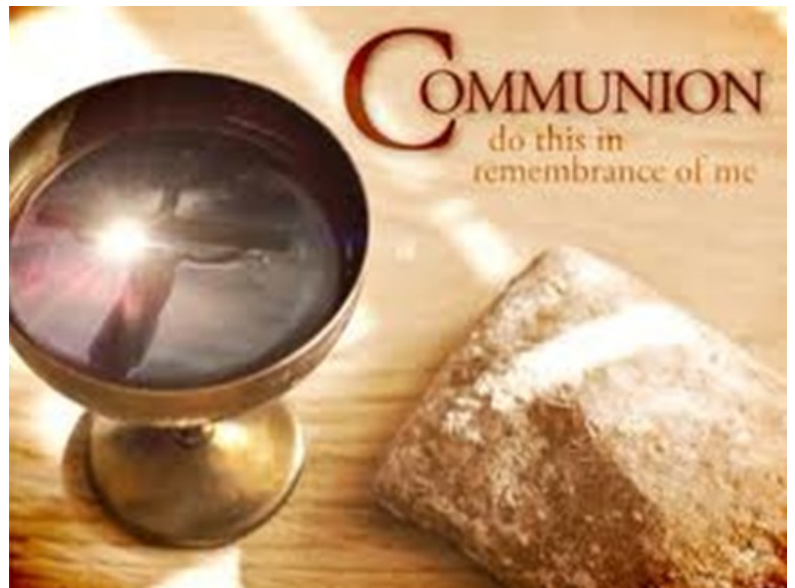
- ♦ Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12
- ♦ Psalm 22
- ♦ Hebrews 10:16-25
- ♦ John 18:1 - 19:42

### April 11, 2020 - Holy Saturday

- ♦ Job 14:1-14
- ♦ Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16
- ♦ 1 Peter 4:1-8
- ♦ Matthew 27:57-66 or
- ♦ John 19:38-42

### April 12, 2020 - Easter Sunday

- ♦ Acts 30:34-43
- ♦ Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
- ♦ Colossians 3:1-4
- ♦ John 20:1-18 or Matthew 28:1-10



### COMMUNION FOR APRIL 5

We will be offering an online Communion on Sunday, April 5. If you are unable to get to the grocery store, or are staying away from stores as part of the Shelter in Place order, we will have Communion elements available for you. This Saturday, April 4 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., we will have a staffed "station" outside the church where you can pick up your elements. This is to be done one person at a time. After you arrive, simply exit your car (one person at a time, please) and pick up one portion of bread and juice from the table. After leaving, we will replace the bread and juice for the next person(s). If you need someone to deliver elements to you, please contact the church via email: [sprucepineumc@gmail.com](mailto:sprucepineumc@gmail.com) or by phone: 828.765.7446.

**COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE UPDATE** - In March we assisted 18 families and individuals with rental, electric, water, medical

### April 19, 2020 - Second Sunday of Easter

- ♦ Acts 2:14a, 22-32
- ♦ Psalm 16
- ♦ 1 Peter 1:3-9
- ♦ John 20:19-31

### April 26, 2020 - Third Sunday of Easter

- ♦ Acts 2:14a, 36-41
- ♦ Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19
- ♦ 1 Peter 1:17-23
- ♦ Luke 24:13-35

## April Calendar

5th - Online Communion - See announcement on page 3.

5th - Palm Sunday

9th - Maundy / Holy Thursday

10th - Good Friday

11th - Holy Saturday

12th - Easter!

26th - May 1st - Mission Trip Postponed to a Later Date

All other Regularly Scheduled Church Activities have been cancelled for the month of April.

Church Services will be recorded and available on the internet through Facebook and YouTube.

## April Birthdays

1st—Beth Ziemba	15th - Tracy Carroll	23rd - Bretta Walker
3rd - Mariea Tountasakis	16th - Dolly Phillips	24th - Scott Wray
4th - Donna Martin	18th - Donnie Peters	
4th - Michael Murphy	20th - Jim Sockwell	
5th - Clara Ahlquist	21st - David Hoeppner	
10th - Zachary Bennett	22nd - Glenn Nance	
14th - Troy Hoilman	22nd - Mary Robinson	

## April Anniversaries

14th - Reg Bezzola & Beth Wyatt

## Thanks to:

- Everyone who has been observing Social Distancing, and checking in on Church members who may need help.
- Pastor Rick & Suzanne, Church members, musicians and others helping with the online Worship.
- To everyone who continues to financially support the church during our time of physical separation.
- All who remember the less fortunate and contribute to the Community Assistance Fund each week.
- Everyone who gives to the Shepherd's Staff, who allowed us to contribute 123 items in March, all who help at the M-Y Parish Food Bank.
- Members who take meals to the sick and shut ins, those who give rides to church and to the doctor for people who can't do it themselves.
- To the Missions Committee for the March Fellowship meal.
- All who serve: lectors, greeters, children's time & nursery.
- Everyone working in quiet, behind the scenes ways each week.

## **Contact Us**

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Visit us on the web at  
[www.sprucepineumc.org](http://www.sprucepineumc.org)

## ***Shepherd's Staff***

Food Donated over the years to  
Shepherd's Staff:

2014 - 1202  
2015 - 1078  
2016 - 1030  
2017 - 1062  
2018 - 1213  
2019 - 1526

January 2020 - 72

February 2020 - 103

March 2020 - 123

Total - 298

SERMONS AND BULLETINS ON  
THE INTERNET!

NOW! - Listen to sermons and  
read the bulletin at:  
[www.sprucepineumc.org](http://www.sprucepineumc.org)