

SPRUCE PINE UMC NEWSLETTER

Volume 10, Issue 5

May 2020

From the Pastor's Desk

A NEW NORMAL



We find ourselves at the turn of another month's page – from April to May. And we still find ourselves in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. I don't need to remind you that life looks a lot different at the moment than it did a couple months ago. But I feel safe in saying that even if we are still sheltering in place and practicing physical distancing 2 months from now, life will look different than it does now. How? Because we are adjusting to a new normal.

Continued on Page 2

*"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"*



In This Issue

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

Thanks to Pastor Rick for the May picture.

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

Let's face it. Our world has changed, whether we like it or not. We have experienced a global pandemic, and not safely from our living rooms while we watch the world suffer on our TVs, tablets, phones, or computers. This one has gotten all of us – all of humanity. To me, this is a reminder that we humans really are connected, no matter how much we try to separate ourselves. We all have hopes, dreams, fears, and needs. We all want the best for our children. We desire the world to be a place of equality and opportunity. And during this crisis, we have seen the distance between the “have-gots” and “have-nots” get much smaller. We are human – together. And together, we are facing this crisis. And together, we are adjusting to a new normal. This is how we will move forward. We will adjust our lives to think more about the needs of others – especially the most vulnerable in our world. We will adjust the ways in which we gather – like using Zoom to have video meetings, instead of always having in-person meetings. By the way, that's what this month's picture is: a computer screen with 9 people meeting through Zoom. It's not as scary or difficult as you might think. Again, we adjust to our new normal. And we adjust together by helping others who question and struggle.

By this part of my article, you are probably about to either skim the rest or stop reading completely. I hear you: Enough Pastor Rick! Stop talking about COVID and adjusting to a new normal! Life is difficult now, and I don't like it! I miss being with people and the way things used to be! I get it. I understand. I miss it, too. However...I want to remind us that this is still Easter (the 50-day season that goes from Easter Day until the day of Pentecost (on Sunday, May 31)), and we are still Easter people. We live with the hope and promise of the empty tomb and the reality of resurrection. Like it or not, resurrection is a new normal. And yes, we have to get used to it. We have to adjust to it. As I've noted recently in my sermons, resurrection is God's “third way” that no one saw coming. Try to imagine the scenario with Jesus' disciples, family, and friends. They knew Jesus – the human. He was with them in person, on a daily basis. They got to know him and love him – as Jesus the human. Then, suddenly, he was taken from them. Arrested. Tried. Convicted. Sentenced. Executed. In a moment, their world changed, and they had to deal with a new normal. And I imagine they prayed and complained to God, as well. “God, please bring things back to normal!” But, God brought about a new normal. A way that no one expected. And they adjusted to it. Yes, they still grieved and missed the human Jesus. But they adjusted to the new normal with renewed hope and promise that God is still God, and God still surprises us.

In the Gospel of John (Chapter 21), after the resurrection, Jesus appears to the disciples, yet they don't recognize him (there are quite a few of these instances recorded in the Bible where people don't know Jesus after the resurrection, and this intrigues me; but this is for another time). In this chapter, the disciples go fishing; they try to go back to what they knew – back to life the way it used to be – before the crisis. Sound familiar? After their attempts to go about life as it was, they catch no fish. Then, a man they don't recognize tells them to throw their nets on the other side of the boat. This man, who they eventually recognize as Jesus teaches them to adjust to a new normal – to try something different. In essence, Jesus says, yes, you can still do things you used to do, but now...do a little adjusting. Things have changed. Even Jesus changed. He must have, because lots of people who knew him didn't recognize him.

So, we can change, too. In fact, that's what resurrection is all about – a new normal. And what a glorious new normal it is! But we still have to adjust to it, because, as I often point out, what has to happen before a resurrection can occur? Death. Something has to die in order for resurrection to come. And many things have “died” in our world now. Are you curious to see what resurrections will occur because of this crisis? Are you excited to see what God has up God's sleeve? Are you willing to be a part of the new normal in which God is still God, God still surprises us, and God still chooses to work through people? This really is an exciting time. It's as if we all are getting a “do over.” Like God has pressed a “reset” button. How will we respond? What will we do differently? What will we still do the same? What will worship look like? What will mission look like? What will love look like? And on and on...

Friends, we are Easter people. Let that sink in and let that guide your life. We know that the worst thing is not the final thing. We get to participate in resurrections – all throughout our lives. And this is a time of resurrection. Let's pay attention. Where is Jesus showing up? Do we recognize him? Where does God want us to show up? We do not have to face this time with dread or fear. Yes, we are grieving the loss of our “normal.” But God is bringing about a new normal. Because, that's what God does – God brings about life from death. And we are still God's children. Together, let's see what God has up God's sleeve!

In hopeful-resurrected-what's-coming-next-service with you... Pastor Rick

Weekly Scriptures

CEB - Common English Bible

May 3, 2020

- ♦ Acts 2:42-47
- ♦ Psalm 23
- ♦ 1 Peter 2:19-25
- ♦ John 10:1-10

May 10, 2020

- ♦ Acts 7:55-60
- ♦ Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
- ♦ 1 Peter 2:2-10
- ♦ John 14:1-14

May 17, 2020

- ♦ Acts 17:22-31
- ♦ Psalm 66:8-20
- ♦ 1 Peter 3:13-22
- ♦ John 14:15-21

May 24, 2020

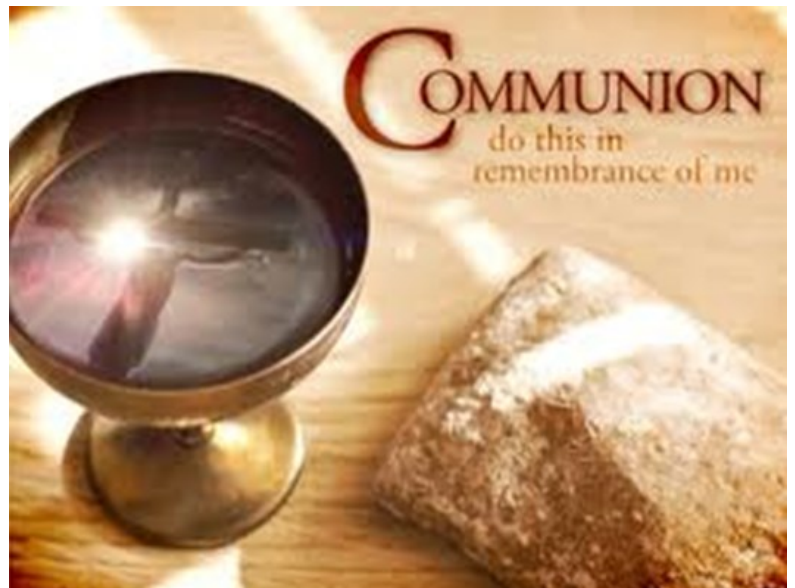
- ♦ Acts 1:6-14
- ♦ Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35
- ♦ 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11
- ♦ John 17:1-11

May 24, 2020, Ascension Sunday

- ♦ Acts 1:1-11
- ♦ Psalm 47
- ♦ Ephesians 1:15-23
- ♦ Luke 24:44-53

May 31, 2020 - Pentecost

- ♦ Acts 2:1-21
- ♦ Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
- ♦ 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13
- ♦ John 7:37-39



COMMUNION FOR MAY 3rd

Don't forget that this Sunday, May 3 is Communion Sunday. We will celebrate Holy Communion during the online service. Please make sure to participate with whatever "elements" you have available: bread, crackers, Goldfish crackers for the kiddos, or even cinnamon rolls. And use whatever juice you prefer: apple, grape, orange, milk, and yes, even coffee. It's not so much about the type of elements we use as the attitude of gratitude we have while remembering Jesus' sacrifice for us. See you online!

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE UPDATE - In April we assisted 6 families and individuals with rental, electric, water, medical and other assistance for over \$899.29. Thanks to the Spruce Pine United Methodist Church for your generosity!

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Hello church family. Thank you for continuing to financially support the church during our time of physical distancing and worshipping online. Your support is truly appreciated, as ministry needs continue to occur. Our Community Assistance fund is strong at the moment, which means that local families will be able to keep the power on, have phone/cell service, and stay housed. We would like to point out that our General Fund giving is falling a bit behind. The General Fund is used to pay 90% of the church's expenses, and we have done a great job at keeping up with our expenses because of your commitment to be the Beacon on the Hill. Thank you for being such a caring and committed group of God's stewards. Together, we make a difference in the lives of so many of our neighbors!

May Calendar

3rd - Online Communion - See announcement on page 3.

7th - National Day of Prayer

10th - Mother's Day

19th - 22nd - Kairos Retreat

24th - Ascension Sunday / Aldersgate Day

25th - Memorial Day

31st - Day of Pentecost

Stay Tuned for Meeting Announcements!

May Birthdays

3rd - Dave Misicka

22nd - Alan Beaver

7th - Betty Sparks

24th - LeeRoy Ledford

8th - Lila Baskin

24th - Cole Martin

18th - Shirley McManus

30th - Jan Banta

19th - Nelle Glenn

30th - Peter Constantian

20th - Grace Buchanan

31st - Wayne Henline

May Anniversaries

10th - Josh & Jennifer Newton

22nd - Sam & Jenell Young

12th - Tim & Sharon Drum

26th - Ed & Jan Banta

15th - Cole & Melissa Martin

27th - Tim Drum II & Kristen

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 14 items in April, 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.
- All who serve: lectors, greeters, children's time & nursery.
- Everyone working in quiet, behind the scenes ways each week.

Contact Us

Spruce Pine UMC
11090 Hwy 226 S
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Phone: (828) 765-7446
Pastor Cell: (704) 604-1888
Suzanne: (704) 604-2429

Office email:
sprucepineumc@gmail.com
spumc3@bellsouth.net
Pastor email:
rev.rick.schilling@gmail.com

Visit us on the web at
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

April 2020 - 14

Total - 312

SERMONS AND BULLETINS ON
THE INTERNET!

NOW! - Listen to sermons and
read the bulletin at:
www.sprucepineumc.org