

SPRUCE PINE UMC NEWSLETTER

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January 2021

From the Pastor's Desk



Ready or not (and I imagine you probably are *really* ready) ... here it comes! Another new year is upon us. I know that 2020 was quite a disruptive and chaotic year, but through all the good and not so good that the year brought, God was with us – in the details of life. And given we're thinking about time, new beginnings, and fresh starts, I am reminded of the wise words from the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 3.

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A New Beginning



*"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"*



HAVE A GREAT NEW YEAR!

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

There's a season for everything and a time for every matter under the heavens: ...a time for giving birth and a time for dying; a time for planting and a time for uprooting; a time for crying and a time for laughing; a time for keeping and a time for throwing away; a time for loving and a time for hating.

As we start off the year, with the old one in the rearview mirror, we can see all these facets were part of 2020. And we can look forward to them (and other elements) being included in 2021. Life is unpredictable and sometimes throws the unexpected our way. But what I've learned along my life's journey is that the purpose of life is the journey itself. We're not supposed to live our lives with a destination or an ending in mind. We can only live one day at a time... one step at a time. All we really have is the present moment. Yes, we hope, dream, and make plans for the future. And, oftentimes, our plans come to fruition. But God has created us to live in the moment and not worry about what may or may not happen. And when we live in the moment, this gets us closer to living an abundant life, as Jesus would say.

One of the biggest challenges of being human is living life to the fullest. And fully living means that we live faithfully, while also taking risks, stretching ourselves, pushing a few boundaries, ending finished chapters, and facing new beginnings. Living fully comes with ups and downs, peaks and valleys, and different "times" like the author of Ecclesiastes notes.

Individually and collectively, we are finishing a difficult chapter in our lives and embarking on a new beginning. So, go ahead and make some plans, because a time is coming when life will be a little more "normal" looking again. What ideas or dreams do you suppose God will birth in you (and us) this year? And what is it in our lives that we need to admit, "it's time to let this go?" Where can we plant seeds of faith, hope, love, encouragement, dignity, and truth this year? What unhealthy habits or thoughts do we need to pluck out of our lives? Over what situation(s) do we need to weep? With whom can we share a few good belly-laughs? What memories, ways of life, and viewpoints should we keep in order to live a full life? And, which of these memories, ways of life, and viewpoints clutter and distort our thinking, thus, we should toss out? Who are we going to share our love with? And what injustices, inequities, and lies are we going to despise enough to make needed changes – maybe even get into some "good trouble" over?

Whatever you wish for this year, may God bless your hopes, dreams, efforts, joys, and frustrations. May you enjoy your journey, one day at a time, one step at a time, fully engaged with each moment. Live life all-in, with no turning back. Allow yourself to see things from a different perspective. Push yourself. Trust yourself. And, trust God, the One who created us for new beginnings. Because God is with us.

In hopeful, new beginning mission with you... Pastor Rick

Polity & Doctrine 101: The Book of Discipline



You may have heard pastors or church leaders refer to the *Book of Discipline*, which begs the question, "What the heck is it?" No, it's not just a long list of disciplinary actions for pastors gone wild or the way United Methodists dole out consequences for their kids' misinformed choices. Instead, it's a book that provides guidance for United Methodists, worldwide, with regard to governing ourselves. This 200-plus-year-old book is not considered infallible, but it is considered a 'document suitable to our heritage and an expression of a future hope.' In short, the *Discipline* details what is expected from both laity and clergy 'as they seek to be effective witnesses in the world as part of the whole body of Christ.' In other words, it is our playbook 'to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.'

Weekly Scriptures

January 3, 2021

- ♦ Isaiah 60:1-6
- ♦ Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
- ♦ Ephesians 3:1-12
- ♦ Matthew 3:1-12

January 10, 2021

- ♦ Genesis 1:1-5
- ♦ Psalm 29
- ♦ Acts 19:1-7
- ♦ Mark 1:4-11

January 17, 2021

- ♦ 1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)
- ♦ Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
- ♦ 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
- ♦ John 1:43-51

January 24, 2021

- ♦ Jonah 3:1-5, 10
- ♦ Psalm 62:5-12
- ♦ 1 Corinthians 7:29-31
- ♦ Mark 1:14-20

January 31, 2021

- ♦ Deuteronomy 18:15-20
- ♦ Psalm 111
- ♦ 1 Corinthians 8:1-13
- ♦ Mark 1:21-28

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE UPDATE

Thanks to your generosity we have helped 17 families and individuals with projects totaling \$4,466.98 in December 2020.

UNITED METHODIST MEMES



Did You Know?

- Did you know we have two United Methodist Conferences within the state of North Carolina? One is the North Carolina Conference (NCC) and the other is the Western North Carolina Conference (WNCC). Spruce Pine United Methodist Church is part of the WNCC. Each Conference supports over 1,000 churches with nearly 300,000 members. Do the math and that's over 2,000 United Methodist Churches with over 600,000 members in North Carolina, alone! #UnitedMethodistStrong
- Did you know that our online worship service is being viewed from Wisconsin to Florida and everywhere in between? Even though we aren't able to fully worship in person, it is wonderful that we have the technology to reach people with God's Good News, no matter where they are.
- Did you know John Wesley coined the term "Agree to Disagree" at the memorial service of a fellow pastor? The two apparently had very somber theological differences and argued with vigor. However, Wesley recognized that, "there are many doctrines of a less essential nature... [and with these] we may agree to disagree." How timely is that message as we end 2020 and begin 2021?

A NOTE FROM RICK AND SUZANNE

Thank you so much for the generous love offering gifts at Christmas and during Pastor Appreciation month. You all are so very generous, and Suzanne and I both feel the love from you. Words cannot express how thankful we are to be in Spruce Pine among this incredible community and congregation. We are looking forward to 2021 and being able to spend time together with you. Again, thank you for your kindness, generosity, and love!

Pastor Rick and Suzanne

January Calendar

1st - New Year's Day
5th - Book Club (scheduled) - 10 am
11th - Administrative Council Meeting - 7 PM - ZOOM
14th - Finance Committee - 5:30 pm - Fellowship Hall or ZOOM

January Birthdays

1 - Juliana Walker	21 - Rev. Rick Schilling
10 - Theresa Conley	23 - Rev. Jeremy Troxler
13 - Janet Ouzts	24 - Jacob Struble
13 - Grant Sparks	25 - Ed Banta
17 - Jane DeVos	25 - Melanie Jirka
17 - Sherry Sherman	25 - Katie Willett
19 - Glenna Tasedan	27 - John Campbell

January Anniversaries

1 - Paul & Julia Kind	21 - Tom & Kimberly Ledford
7 - Framton & Danna Gibson	28 - Chris Nash & Sara Snyder
17 - Glen & Jane DeVos	

Thanks to:

- All who have helped with online Worship!
- All who worked on the Local Mission Trip!!
- All who helped with the social distanced showers, the Angel Tree, and Santa for Seniors! You are a loving church!
- Everyone who has been observing Social Distancing, and checking in on Church members who may need help.
- Pastor Rick & Suzanne, Bruce Ikard, 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.
- Everyone who gives to the Shepherd's Staff, who allowed us to contribute 107 items in December, 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 those who can't do it themselves.
- All who serve: lectors, children's time, etc.
- 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

Shepherd's Staff

Food Donated over the years to
Shepherd's Staff:

2014 - 1202
2015 - 1078
2016 - 1030
2017 - 1062
2018 - 1213
2019 - 1526
2020 - 769

January 2020 - 72
February 2020 - 103
March 2020 - 123
April 2020 - 14
May 2020 - 8
June 2020 - 59
July 2020 - 44
August 2020 - 39
September 2020 - 19
October 2020 - 94
November 2020 - 87
December 2020 - 107
Total - 769

SERMONS AND BULLETINS ON
THE INTERNET!

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