

# SPUMC NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 4

April 2021

## Mission Statement

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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## Sermons and Bulletins:

Watch the sermons and read  
the bulletins (and newsletters)  
at:

[www.sprucepineumc.org](http://www.sprucepineumc.org)



## From the Pastor's Desk: The Surprise Ending



During our Lenten journey this year, we've been examining God's Story of the improbable/impossible. And we've been looking at it through various storytelling components that are found in all good stories. We've also discussed several threads (divine and human) that run throughout God's Story as well – such as God's love never gives up on us, even though we tend to distance ourselves from God.

And now that Easter is upon us, we've come to the end of the "God's Story" sermon series, and we find ourselves facing one of the best storytelling components: the Surprise Ending. In this type of ending, when all hope is lost and there seems to be no hope, the impossible, unexpected happens. And no one saw it coming. This truly is what God writes into God's Story. God neither accepts death, nor rejects death. God "over-accepts" death, and tosses in a surprise twist ending to the story: **resurrection**. And no one saw it coming.

**Continued on Page 2**



## CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to our Volunteers of the Year for 2020. Adult winners are Bobbi Abele and Danna Gibson.

The Youth Volunteer of the Year is Troy Hoilman.

# Weekly Scriptures

## **April 1, 2021**

### **Holy / 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 2, 2021**

### **Good Friday**

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

## **April 3, 2021**

### **Holy Saturday**

- ♦ Job 14:1-14
- ♦ Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16
- ♦ 1 Peter 4:1-8
- ♦ Matthew 27:57-66 or John 18:38-42

## **April 4, 2021**

### **Easter Day**

- ♦ Acts 10:34-43
- ♦ Psalm 19
- ♦ 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
- ♦ John 2:13-22

## **April 11, 2021**

- ♦ Acts 4:32-35
- ♦ Psalm 133
- ♦ 1 John 1:1 - 2:2
- ♦ John 20:19-31

## **April 18, 2021**

- ♦ Acts 3:12-19
- ♦ Psalm 4
- ♦ 1 John 3:1-7
- ♦ Luke 24:36b-48

## **April 25, 2021**

- ♦ Acts 4:5-12
- ♦ Psalm 23
- ♦ 1 John 3:16-24
- ♦ John 10:11-18

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

On that first Easter morning, those who went to the tomb to retrieve Jesus' body (in order to prepare it for a proper burial) were stunned to find that the tomb where Jesus was placed was empty. Shock and fear set in. What's happened to his body? Did someone steal it? Why would someone take his body? Where would they have taken it? Questions and emotions abound. As Mary Magdalene tries to understand the present reality of an empty tomb, she turns to the ones who showed up and blurts out, "What have you done with him? Tell me where you have taken him, so that I can get him." She cries because of her broken heart. The resurrected Jesus was one of those who showed up with Mary. He asks her why she's crying, and Mary tells of her concern about the loss of her friend and how it seems someone has stolen his body. Jesus quietly speaks, "Mary." And, suddenly, when all hope seems gone, when the story surely was over, Mary realizes it is Jesus speaking to her. He is the One – the Messiah, the promised deliverer. He is God... up close and personal. And God speaks to us because God desires a relationship with us. And God always fulfills a promise. And God provides all we need during the difficult times in life. And God calls the unlikely and offers us a better story. And God's love never gives up on us. Mary has experienced, firsthand, the Surprise Ending. The ending no one saw coming. She (and all of us) expected death. She found life... new life. And the new life she found wasn't just in the resurrected Jesus. Mary (and all of us) find and experience new life through God. Just when a part of our stories seems finished, or hope is gone, God surprises us and brings about new life – usually in a way we didn't see coming.

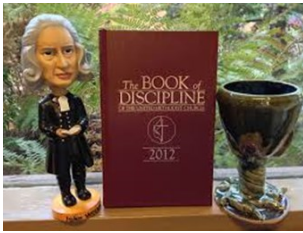
That's the Easter Story. That's God's Story. Just when we think we've got God (and God's Story) figured out, God surprises us. We are a part of God's Story of relentless love that changes everything. And we are Easter people. We live with the hope and promise of the empty tomb. That means that God can roll away the stones we place in front of the tombs in our lives. Whether that tomb is filled with bad memories, a dream that seems as good as dead, an unhealthy habit that's gotten the better of us, or self-judgment/self-doubt, God can roll away the stone and empty out our tombs. And when God empties tombs, new life is the result. Resurrection. The unexpected, surprise ending no one saw coming. Let us remember we are Easter people – all year. What a great ending to a great story. Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed!

In joyful, hope-filled, empty-tomb service with you... Pastor Rick

## **COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE UPDATE**

Thanks to your generosity we have helped 15 families and individuals with projects totaling \$3,157.07 in March 2021.

Since 2013, we have helped families and individuals with \$183,541.75 through community assistance.



## Methodism 101: Local Pastors, Deacons, Elders (Oh My!)

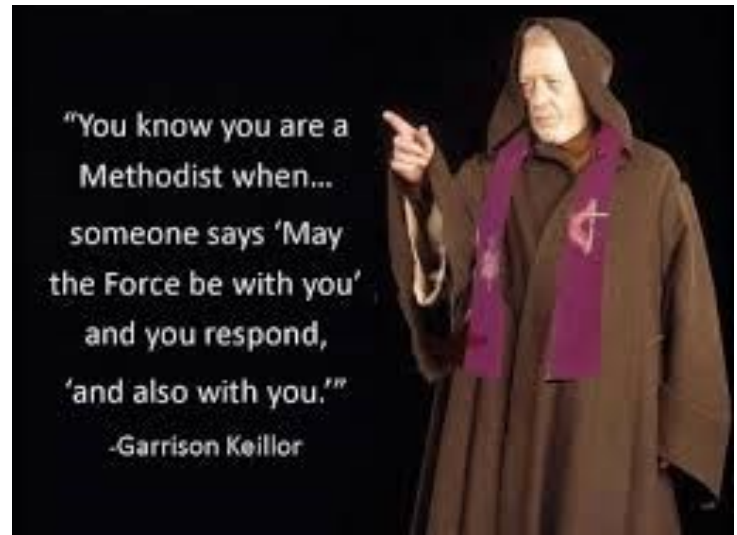
The question has come up, more than once, on the difference between these three. Hopefully, the following will provide a bit of clarity:

A licensed local pastor (LLP) is one who has answered the call to serve the mission of Jesus Christ through the work of a local congregation and are clergy members of the annual conference in which they are appointed. They are not ordained, but perform all the duties of a pastor. In addition, they itinerate from appointment to appointment from the Bishop and Cabinet. All LLPs have some form of higher education, whether a Master of Divinity from an approved United Methodist school, or they complete the United Methodist approved Course of Study. And, it is not unusual for an LLP to have a full-time job outside of the church, as well as lead a local congregation!

Deacons are ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of word, service, compassion and justice. They share the good news in word and in their advocacy for the poor, neglected, oppressed and discouraged; provide ministries of mercy; and invite Christians into these ministries. They may or may not itinerate from appointment to As such fact, a Deacon's occupation is often outside the local church, in what is known as extension ministry. They hold a bachelor's degree and either a Master of Divinity or other theological master's degree.

An Elder is an ordained minister who is called to ministries of Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order, and has completed the formal preparation to preach and teach. They preside at the celebration of the sacraments (Communion and Baptism), administer the Church through pastoral guidance, and lead the congregations under their care in service ministry to the world. They are considered the spiritual leaders of their congregations. Depending on the size of the church, they may itinerate to a new appointment approximately every 3-5 years for churches with less than 200, and every 5-8 for larger churches (although there is nothing mandating this particular formula). They hold both a bachelor's degree as well as a Master of Divinity from an approved United Methodist seminary.

## UNITED METHODIST MEMES



### Did You Know?

The colors symbolizing the days and seasons of the Christian year, used for stoles and other vestments, altar cloths and other paraments, and church decorations, are known as liturgical colors. They are as follows:

Advent – purple

Christmas - white

Season after Epiphany – white for the first and last Sundays and green at other times

Lent – purple

Easter – white until the day of Pentecost and red on that day

Season after Pentecost - white for the first (Trinity) and last (Christ the King) Sundays and for All Saints Day

Ordinal Times (all other seasons) – green

So why change colors in the first place, you ask? Well, the colors express emotions and ideas that are associated with each of the seasons of the liturgical year. Purple is the ancient royal color and therefore a symbol of the sovereignty of Christ. White symbolizes brightness and newness. Red symbolizes fire, and therefore is the color of the Holy Spirit. Green is the color of growth.

## April Calendar

1st - Holy / Maundy Thursday Service  
2nd - Good Friday Service  
4th - Easter Sunrise Service - Orchard at Altapass  
4th - Easter Service - 11:00 am only  
15th - Finance Committee Meeting - 5:30 pm - Fellowship Hall  
18th - Administrative Council Meeting - 12:15 pm - Fellowship Hall

## April Birthdays

1 - Beth Ziemba	14 - Troy Hoilman	21 - David Hoepfner
3 - Mariea Tountasakis	15 - Tracy Carroll	22 - Glenn Nance
4 - Donna Martin	16 - Dolly Phillips	22 - Mary Robinson
4 - Mike Murphy	18 - Donnie Peters	23 - Bretta Walker
5 - Clara Ahlquist	20 - Ben Deyton	24 - Dwight Willett
10 - Zach Bennett	20 - Jim Sockwell	24 - Scott Wray

## April Anniversaries

We have no April Anniversaries :-( Somebody please get married!

## Thanks to:

- All who have helped with the restart of in person worship and with the continuation of online Worship!
- 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 218 items in March 2021, (our best monthly food giving of all time) 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.
- All who have been participating in online meetings and restarting in person meetings.
- All working on Church facility renovations!
- 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**  
**2020 - 769**

**January 2021 - 122**  
**February 2021 - 65**  
**March 2021 - 218**  
**Total - 405**