

# SPUMC NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 10

October 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: All Hallows' Eve



As we turn the calendar from September to October, we find ourselves entering into the final quarter of 2021. Hard to believe, isn't it? October ushers in one of my favorite "seasons" of the year: pumpkin-spice season! Yes, this is the time of year for pumpkin-spice lattes, pumpkin-spice Cheerios, pumpkin-spice Spam (yes, that really exists!), and on and on! For me, pumpkin-spiced products signal Autumn and the upcoming holidays. But, before we rush into Thanksgiving and Christmas, I want to shed some light on one of the Schillings' favorite holiday – Halloween. For those of you who wonder how we can love Halloween so much, please don't be quick to judge. Halloween is more than just an all-out candyfest, and it's not a celebration of devils and demons. Far from it. So, here's the real story on Halloween.

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# Weekly Scriptures

**October 3, 2021**

**World Communion Sunday**

- ♦ Job 1:1; 2:1-10
- ♦ Psalm 26 or Psalm 25
- ♦ Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12
- ♦ Mark 10:2-16

**October 10, 2021**

- ♦ Job 23:1-9, 16-17
- ♦ Psalm 22:1-15
- ♦ Hebrews 4:12-16
- ♦ Mark 10:17-31

**October 17, 2021**

- ♦ Job 38:1-7 (34-41)
- ♦ Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c
- ♦ Hebrews 5:1-10
- ♦ Mark 10:35-45

**October 24, 2021**

- ♦ Job 42:1-6, 10-17
- ♦ Psalm 34:1-8 (19-22)
- ♦ Hebrews 7:23-28
- ♦ Mark 10:46-52

**October 31, 2021**

- ♦ Ruth 1:1-18
- ♦ Psalm 146
- ♦ Hebrews 9:11-14
- ♦ Mark 12:28-34

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

Halloween, or All Hallows' Eve, has been a Christian celebration for more than a millennium. The word "hallow" means holy or sacred – as in "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed (holy) be thy name." So, Halloween is a "Holy Eve," leading into All Saints' Day on November 1. The saints who have gone on before us are the holy ones, the hallowed ones. All Saints' Day celebrates the resurrection of the dead, remembers our beloved relatives and holy ones who came before us, and proclaims they are living still.

Halloween finds its earliest roots in a pre-Christian Celtic festival celebrating their new year on November 1. This day marked the end of summer, the harvest, and the beginning of the dark, cold winter – a time of year that was often associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the new year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. As the Christian faith spread throughout Europe after Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, the church connected its own celebration with local traditions. This is how Halloween came into being. Given the closeness of life and death associated with All Hallows' Eve, many superstitions were born – especially when few people understood the priests' Latin liturgies. Thus, goblins, ghosts, demons, devils, witches, and warlocks became part of this observance that actually speaks to our morality and mortality, judgment and grace.

It's unfortunate that Halloween has been commercially separated from its Christian heritage, and its pre-Christian roots. And, those who boycott Halloween as a supposedly demonic holiday have misunderstood its history, and have missed an opportunity to face dark days with resurrection hope. Halloween insists that death doesn't have the final word. That's why we joke about it in silly costumes. Halloween reminds us that others have prepared the way for us, and that we have a duty to prepare the next generations. That's why we hand out candy to neighborhood children – as a sign of invitation and resurrection hope.

Maybe in spite of ourselves, under the costumed characters and moonlit walks from door to door, there is still a remnant of All Hallows' Eve in our candy-coated celebrations. The costumed ghosts and skeletons foretell the truth that one day our names will mark a tombstone. The little fire-fighters and ballerinas reveal the dreams we see in generations who follow us – and remind us of the dreams we once had. The knock on a neighbor's door reminds us we are part of a community. To play with death in the dark announces our mortality with both hope and faith. We remember that death is not the end and that Christ, through the resurrection, has the last word. And this deserves a celebration... and some chocolate!

In hallowed and humble service with you... Pastor Rick







## **Methodism 101: Spiritual Formation – Grace (Part 2)**

Last month's newsletter began a discussion on grace, as defined within our faith tradition of Methodism. First up was prevenient grace which is God's active presence in our lives before we ever sense the Divine at work *in* our lives. It is the grace given by God before we even begin our relationship with God. It is the grace that goes before.

Prevenient grace is what prepares us for *justifying grace*. "Justification," said Wesley, "is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins, and ... our acceptance with God and the assurance of forgiveness that comes from turning toward God's gracious gift of new life." In other words, it is our realignment with God.

Wesley considered justification, or justifying grace, as the doorway into the house of God's salvation – where God provides us our identity as beloved sons and daughters and incorporates us into the body of Christ, the church. When we read about Wesley's heart being "strangely warmed," that is him experiencing justifying grace.

When we lean into our worth in God's eyes, that is the essence of justifying grace. To accept that identity is to enter the doorway into a whole new existence. So, continuing the analogy of the house, justifying grace is the doorway and the process of walking through it. The door is open with a welcome sign on it. This is where we walk toward our new future.

But a house is not simply a doorway and halls. Stay tuned...



## **Did You Know?**

- The Christian calendar was created by an Eastern European monk named Dionysius Exiguus. He invented the now commonly used Anno Domini (A.D.) era, which counts years based on the birth of Jesus. He came up with this concept in the year 525, or, 525 years after the birth of Jesus. But heads up: Many scholars believe the actual date of Jesus' birth was several years earlier than what we would call Year "0."
- Islam, Judaism, and Christianity all recognize Abraham as a pivotal figure in its history. In Islam, he is honored for his obedience and is considered one of the prophets. In Judaism, he is the one from whom all Jews descended. And in Christianity, he is seen as the 'father of our faith,' and is honored for his obedience. Maybe the "big three" religions have more in common than differences. That's some good news in a divided world.
- John Wesley stated, "[He] learned more about Christianity from [his] mother than from all the theologians in England." Moms rocked back then and still do today. Thank you, moms, for helping shape future generations!



## October Calendar

3rd - World Communion Sunday  
3rd - Administrative Council Meeting - After Church - Fellowship Hall  
5th - SPUMC Book Club - 10 am  
5th - Global Methodist Meeting - 6pm - Cross Street Building  
10th - Charge Conference - ZOOM - 2 pm  
11th - UMW Nightingale Circle Meeting - 3 pm  
14th - Finance Committee - 5:30 pm - Fellowship Hall  
17th - Summit Youth Meeting - 4 PM  
23rd - Community Baby Shower - Fellowship Hall  
24th - Summit Youth Meeting - 4 PM  
31st - Reformation Sunday / Halloween / Trunk or Treat - 5:30 - 7:30 pm

## October Birthdays

2 - Madeline McKenzie	14 - David Goodnight	22 - Glen DeVos
6 - Ed Martin	15 - Sheilah Sockwell	22 - Jo Anne Prendergast
8 - Randy Hembree	17 - Rachel Hoilman	23 - James Nipper
9 - Pat Ross	17 - Melanie Murphy	23 - Savannah Stanbery
10 - Mike Briggs	17 - Judy Williams	24 - Aaron Buchanan
11 - Norma Smith	17 - Jenell Young	26 - Bradley Willis
12 - Becky Nance	20 - Ernie Wells, Jr.	31 - Wanda Henline
13 - Greg Stanbery	21 - Nancy Ball	

## October Anniversaries

2 - Rick & Suzanne Schilling	13 - Tom & Eva Jobin
5 - Bert & Diane Sheeley	15 - James & Deidre Nipper
10 - Andrew & Rachelle Shock	

## Thanks to:

- Everyone working with Lamplighters!
- All who have helped with the restart of in person worship and with the continuation of online Worship!!!
- Everyone helping with the online Worship.
- All who remember the less fortunate and contribute to the Community Assistance Fund.
- All who have contributed to the Roof Fund and the AV Fund.
- Everyone who gives to the Shepherd's Staff, who allowed us to contribute 494 items in August 2021, (our best monthly food giving of all time) and 157 in September. 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 working on Church facility renovations!
- 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**  
**2020 - 769**

**January 2021 - 122**  
**February 2021 - 65**  
**March 2021 - 218**  
**April 2021 - 225**  
**May 2021 - 269**  
**June 2021 - 335**  
**July 2021 - 397**  
**August 2021 - 494**  
**September 2021 - 157**  
**Total - 2282**

## **COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE UPDATE**

Thanks to your generosity we have helped 10 families and individuals with projects totaling than \$1,067.71 in September 2021.

Since 2013, we have helped families and individuals with \$195,332.79 through community assistance.