

SPUMC NEWS

Volume 14, Issue 3

March 2023

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 newslet-
ters) at:

www.sprucepineumc.org

How Are You with Waiting?



Picture this: you call an 800 number for customer service because you need some help with a company's product you bought. You are greeted with the automated attendant who asks you to pay close attention because their menu has recently changed – like we knew what the old menu actually was. Then the attendant lists countless different options for you to choose from, and yet, none of them seem quite right for your dilemma. So, you press the dreaded “0” button to be connected to a live human being. You hear some pleasant 1990s “on hold” music that gets interrupted by the occasional reinforcement that your call is very important, so please keep holding. Finally, a new message interrupts to let you know that your call will be answered in the order it was received and your wait time is expected to be “x” number of minutes. We have been placed in a holding pattern. We’ve been asked to wait. And although I feel my own blood pressure rising as I write about a common experience many of us have experienced, I ask you – how are you with waiting?

See... I'm not always the best “wait-er” on the planet. I've seen others who really don't mind waiting. They seem downright calm throughout the whole process of waiting. And yes, I feel that waiting is a process – at least for me. Because I don't like to wait, and I don't think I wait very well. And I believe God knows that many of us don't like to wait or wait very well. So, what does God do? God gives us a whole season of waiting – Lent. We are barely into this 40-day journey of unknowns through the wilderness to Jesus's cross (and ours) and I've already been challenged because of waiting. Right now, I'm waiting for Spring to show up. Even though I like the variations of all four seasons, I'm ready for consistently warmer weather. I'm ready for the colors of the budding trees and the myriad of vibrant flowers that make me smile. I'm ready for the “new life” that Springs brings to us. But... it's only the beginning of March. And although the official start of spring is close on the calendar, it doesn't feel close. And so, I wait.

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Weekly Scriptures

March 5, 2023

- ♦ Genesis 12:1-4a
- ♦ Psalm 121
- ♦ Romans 4:1-5, 13-17
- ♦ John 3:1-17

March 12, 2023

- ♦ Exodus 17:1-7
- ♦ Psalm 95
- ♦ Romans 5:1-11
- ♦ John 4:5-42

March 19, 2023

- ♦ 1 Samuel 16:1-13
- ♦ Psalm 23
- ♦ Ephesians 5:8-14
- ♦ John 9:1-41

March 26, 2023

- ♦ Ezekial 37:1-14
- ♦ Psalm 130
- ♦ Romans 8:6-11
- ♦ John 11:1-45

**LENT
FEBRUARY 22
THROUGH
APRIL 6**

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

Don't get me wrong; I'm not trying to wish my life away. Time is rolling along quickly enough. It's just that I experience times in life when my spirit stirs, creativity calls to me, and the general unknown-ness of life creates a little chaos in my soul. I seem to be experiencing all of these at the moment. This is why I appreciate Lent. Lent is God's way of getting my attention – so that I take my focus off the stirrings and the unknowns and center my gaze upon the ways of the cross. The ways of the cross remind me that although Lent is about doing a personal spiritual reflection and inventory, I become more like God by thinking outward beyond my stirrings and unknowns.

In our 8-week study of the Beatitudes, we recently discussed what it means to be meek. Many people see meekness as a negative quality – like it's a weakness. But the original Greek word that we translate into the English word "meek" is both a noun and a verb. And the verb portion of this word reveals that being meek means we are willing to have a teachable spirit. Not that we lose any of our personality, or zeal, or fervor. But when we are meek, we move from rebellion to a state of complete loyalty to, and reliance upon, our Teacher – God. This is what the journey of Lent is about. Waiting. Listening. Waiting. Learning. Waiting. Changing. Waiting. Maturing. Waiting. Our spirits need a Spring cleaning. We need to get rid of that which holds us back to make room for new life that God has for us. Much of this happens through the process of waiting. And waiting isn't just us sitting back and doing nothing. Waiting involves our active engagement with God and others. Waiting involves a time of planting and growing through studying God's word. Waiting involves worshiping our Creator. Waiting involves imitating our Creator.

As we wait this Lenten season, during our Sunday services we will examine the many questions we ask – and the underlying questions we have. We will discuss how these questions (and underlying questions) reveal who we really are – and who we are meant to be as disciples. And we will discover that we are more than people with questions; we are people with answers to others' questions and prayers.

So, how are you at waiting? Are you willing to make an intentional 40-day Lenten journey this year? If so, what do you hope to discover? What would you like to change? What would you like to hear from God? How do you want to live so that you leave a mark on the world? Let's journey together and hold each other's questions close to ours. May we let God speak to us as we wait.

In Lenten-wilderness-journeying-waiting-service with you... Pastor Rick

FROM OUR SPUMC MISSIONS TEAM

We have secured a spot at Big Creek Missions in Western Kentucky and are excited about this opportunity to serve with this ministry. Big Creek is assisting with flood damage that happened this past summer in Leslie and Floyd Counties, Kentucky. They have been doing low-income home repair for decades as well. The best part about this ministry is that you don't have to do construction unless you want to. They partner with other community agencies for other ways to serve. You can visit with homebound senior citizens, work the food pantry or their kid's program. We hope this encourages a lot of people to sign up for this. We will leave for the trip on Sunday, April 23 after church and will return on Friday, April 28.

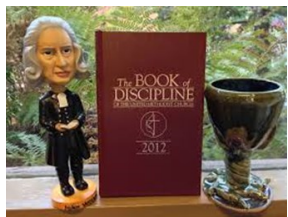
Check out www.bigcreekmission.com for more information. You can also register yourself for the trip on the website. Log in: melanie@wamyccommunityaction.org Password: spumc

Group nickname is Spruce Pine Hands and Feet and the trip is listed as SPUMC Spring Mission Trip 2023. If you have any questions, please text or call Melanie Jirka at 828-260-1714.

Let's go be the Hands and Feet of Jesus!

Methodism 101: The Class Meeting

There is a form of accountability within the Methodist faith that does not get a whole lot of press in the 21st century – and that is the notion of class meetings. First a little history: The class meeting started in 1742 when a group of Methodists were trying to figure out how to pay off a building debt in Bristol. Captain Foy suggested that the Bristol society be divided up into groups of 12 people. One person in each group would be designated the leader and would be responsible for visiting each person in their group every week to collect one penny from them to pay off the building debt.



As this plan was put into practice, it became apparent that many Methodists were not keeping the “General Rules,” which are: do no harm, do good, and attend the ordinances of God (i.e., prayer, searching the Scriptures, receiving Communion, etc.). Almost immediately, Wesley realized that the class leaders (who were the ones who had originally committed to making the weekly collection) were ideally suited to address the lack of discipline in keeping the General Rules among the people called Methodists.

Classes were intended to have between 7 and 12 members in them. They had both women and men in the classes and class leaders were both women and men. The class meeting was focused on three things. First, it held people accountable to keeping the “General Rules.” Second, the class meeting was a place where weekly, every Methodist answered the question, “How is it with your soul?” (Methodist historian Scott Kisker rephrases this question as “How is your life in God?”) Third, it was a place where Methodists were encouraged to give weekly to the relief of the poor.

The phrase that seems to best capture what the people called Methodists believed was so important about the class meeting was “watching over one another in love.” Early Methodists were asked to invite others into their lives and to be willing to enter deeply into the lives of other people so that together they would grow in grace. They were committed to the idea that the Christian life is a journey of growth in grace, or sanctification. And they believed that they needed one another to persevere on this journey.

In other words, a Methodist class is an answer to the question of what it might look like to “watch over one another in love” in the twenty-first century. For anyone thinking, “Hmmmm. Small Group?” This might be a draft as to what it could look like. Just a thought.

UNITED METHODIST MEMES

Time Change Song



WORDS: Dean McIntyre, 1995
MUSIC: John Hughes, 1907

CWM RHONDDA
87.87.89

Did You Know?

The General Rule of Discipleship is a contemporary restatement of the General Rules. It states we are *To witness to Jesus Christ in the world and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.*

To break it down a bit further:

- Methodists are to share that they know Jesus and tell others who Jesus is and what he is doing in the world.
- Methodists are to live in the world, walking and serving with Christ, particularly among the poor, the sick, the outcasts, and the prisoners.
- Methodists are to follow Jesus by imitating him.
- Methodists are to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

**Daylight Saving Time
Returns on March 12**

**SPRING RETURNS
ON MARCH 20TH**

March Calendar

5th - Administrative Council Meeting - 12:30 pm
6th - SPUMC Book Club - Parlor - 10 am
6th - Bible Study - 10 am (Faithlink class) - 6:00 pm - Fellowship Hall & Zoom
12th - Daylight Saving time returns - Spring Forward
13th - UMW/UWIF Meeting - 3pm - Welcome Center
13th - Bible Study - 10 am (Faithlink class) - 6:00 pm - Fellowship Hall & Zoom
16th - Trustees Meeting - 6:30 pm - Fellowship Hall
17th - St. Patrick's Day
19th - UMCOR Sunday (Offering)
20th - Spring Begins
20th - Bible Study - 10 am (Faithlink class) - 6:00 pm - Fellowship Hall & Zoom
23rd - Finance Committee - 5:30pm - Fellowship Hall
27th - Bible Study - 10 am (Faithlink class) - 6:00 pm - Fellowship Hall & Zoom

March Birthdays

3 - Susan Basini	13 - Sara Allen	17 - Zeke Deyton
3 - Cassidy Broome	13 - Barbara Henline	20 - Jon Goldman
3 - Gideon Broome	14 - Jim McManus	23 - Bill Prendergast
3 - Kenton Broome	14 - Sara Powell	24 - Sharon Drum
4 - Nicole Struble	15 - Jodi Rhymer	25 - Jeb Bell
7 - Bert Sheeley	16 - Landon Miller	27 - Meredith Hoilman
12 - Tom Jobin	17 - Jake Deyton	30 - Tom Ledford

March Anniversaries

8 - Lloyd & Nelle Glenn 19 - Philip & Michela Buchanan

Thanks to:

- Everyone working with Lamplighters!
- Everyone working with the *Beacon Center*!
- All who keep us updated on the Prayer List.
- All who contribute to the Community Assistance Fund.
- Everyone who gives to the Shepherd's Staff.
- All who help at the M-Y Parish Food Bank.
- All who contribute to the Mission Team and who plan on participating!
- Those who take meals to the sick & 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, Greeters, etc.
- 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 - 1,202
2015 - 1,078
2016 - 1,030
2017 - 1,062
2018 - 1,213
2019 - 1,526
2020 - 769
2021 - 2,892
2022 - 1,524

January 2023 - 83
February 2023 - 173

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE UPDATE

Thanks to your generosity we
have helped 14 families and in-
dividuals with projects totaling
\$4,058.92 in February 2023.

Since 2013, we have helped
families and individuals with
projects totaling \$277,205.38
through community assistance.