

SPUMC NEWS

Volume 14, Issue 5

May 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 newsletters)
at:

www.sprucepineumc.org

Living as Easter People (Not Faster People)



Last month, I noted that as I was typing some thoughts for the April newsletter, I inadvertently typed the word “Easter” as “Faster.” That typo got me thinking about how we live in the midst of “fastness” every day in a fast world. But we are Easter people. We live with the hope and promise of the empty tomb. Our lives are supposed to be full of change, transformation, and resurrections. Yes... resurrections. To live as Easter people means we believe that God isn't just concerned with where we spend eternity. God also is concerned about where we are right now – in this world. And God doesn't want us to be satisfied with merely seeking peace and comfort for ourselves. God wants us to encounter the risen Jesus on a daily basis (actually numerous times every day) and then engage our faith. We are to live as Jesus did – allowing love to guide our every thought, word, and deed. And for this to occur means we need changes, transformations, and resurrections to happen now... and throughout our lives.

We also recently noted that the resurrection disrupts our lives, causing a crisis-response (actually... responses) in us. Resurrection is God's unanticipated response to our fears – not just of death, but our fears of everything. And this is disruptive. Because we're told over and over to live with fear. Fear the unknown. Fear the “other” or “outsider.” Fear losing power and control. Fear change. Fear progress. Fear being left out. Fear being uncool. Fear not having the latest and greatest stuff. And on and on it goes. Living as Easter people means we can let go of our fears – we can let them die. Because when they die, God will bring resurrection... new life from the ashes. And this is a resurrection that many of us can use right now.

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Wonderful Wednesday Meals Return!

Our Wonderful Wednesday meals are back on the third Wednesday of each month. This month, on Wednesday May 17 at 6:00 p.m., the Care & Fellowship team is sponsoring a “Comfort Food” themed night of wonderfully indulgent and comforting foods. Whatever you define as a comfort food, you are invited to bring that dish to share with everyone. Save the date and come out for a great meal and fellowship with your church family. We look forward to gathering with everyone!

Weekly Scriptures

May 7, 2023

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

May 14, 2023, Mother's Day

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

May 21, 2023

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

May 21, Ascension Sunday

- ♦ Acts 1:1-11
- ♦ Psalm 47 or Psalm 93
- ♦ Ephesians 1:15-23
- ♦ Luke 24:44-53

May 28, 2023

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

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

Sometimes these changes (the transformations) are quite big and very noticeable. Other times, maybe most of the time, the changes in our lives are small ones. And as the small ones add up incrementally over time, we've grown and morphed into transformed (resurrected) people. For example, in the Gospel of John, after Jesus's resurrection, John writes about the disciples who are fishing. The resurrected Jesus has already appeared to the disciples once before this story, and we see they are returning to a more "normal" life after dealing with the tragic death of their friend. They're back at work after dealing with a crisis. In this story, Jesus is on the beach. He has made a campfire and then stands at the water's edge to greet his friends. When the disciples see him from a distance, they once again, do not recognize this person as the resurrected Jesus. On a side note, there are quite a few of these instances recorded in the Bible where people don't recognize Jesus after the resurrection, and this intrigues me; but this is for another time. Jesus calls out to the disciples, asking about their catch. The disciples respond by saying they struck out. They haven't caught any fish. Jesus then tells them to try throwing their fishing nets on the other side of the boat. To which the disciples must think, "Really? Do you really think fishing is that easy? Just change sides?" But... they listen to this man and try his suggestion. And voila! They catch so many fish that they can't haul them all in.

The point is – small steps. Small changes. Jesus didn't suggest some grand or hugely different approach to fishing. He merely suggested a small change: try the other side of the boat. But this small change led to a big outcome. Living as Easter people means we allow God to make changes in our lives. And usually, they will be small ones. They might not seem significant. We might even question the validity or necessity for small changes. But, again, the small changes add up over time to create transformed and resurrected lives. I encourage you to live with the reality of resurrection(s) in your life. God often surprises us when we least expect it. Change is possible. Change is expected. Change does not need to be feared. Resurrection changes us. And we live in 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? What small changes is God asking us to make? Let's allow God to transform us. Because that's what God does – God brings about life from death. And we are Easter people!

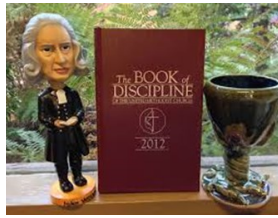
In "Easter-people-raise-your-voices" service with you... Pastor Rick

CHURCH WIDE TOWN HALL STYLE MEETING

Much has been happening in the United Methodist (UM) denomination over the past year. Information, misinformation, truths, and speculations have been distributed through numerous platforms. It can be confusing to understand the current state of the denomination as well as the potential direction(s) for its future. As such, SPUMC will have one more churchwide townhall-style gathering on Sunday, May 7, 2023: 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. In this gathering, we will provide information about the United Methodist Church and the issues surrounding churches and clergy who are disaffiliating from (leaving) the UM denomination. This will not be a "live" question-answer session. As such, we are asking that any questions you have about the UM denomination, Spruce Pine UMC, disaffiliation, UM polity and/or doctrine, or other pertinent topics be sent to Pastor Rick in advance. Please send them via email - rev.rick.schilling@gmail.com (direct) or sprucepineumc@gmail.com (church), or drop them off at the church office, or in the "Question Box" in the Welcome Center prior to Wednesday, April 26 to allow time for Pastor Rick to get to all the questions. See you on May 7!

Methodism 101 – The Method to our Methodism

Within the connectional structure of The United Methodist Church, conferences provide the primary groupings of people and churches for discernment, decision-making, and the means for mission. Wesley described Christian conferencing as a spiritual discipline through which God's grace may be revealed. At every level of the connection, church leaders and members come together in conversation, or Holy Conferencing, to discuss important issues and discover God's will for the church. The word, conference, thus refers to both the assembly and organization of people as well as the process of discerning God's call together. Here's a breakdown of the various conferences found within The United Methodist Church:



General Conference: As the primary legislative body, General Conference is the only entity with the authority to speak on behalf of the entire United Methodist Church (worldwide). The General Conference meets every four years to consider the business and mission of the church. An equal number of lay and clergy delegates are elected from United Methodist conferences around the world to decide matters of policy and procedure for the denomination. Only through the General Conference can our United Methodist Book of Discipline be amended.

Jurisdictional Conferences: There are five geographic jurisdictions, or regions, in the United States, which are comprised of eight to 15 annual conferences each (see below for a definition of annual conference). Put another way, several annual conferences make up a jurisdictional conference. Spruce Pine United Methodist Church is part of the Southeastern Jurisdiction. Bishops get elected at the gatherings of Jurisdictional Conferences.

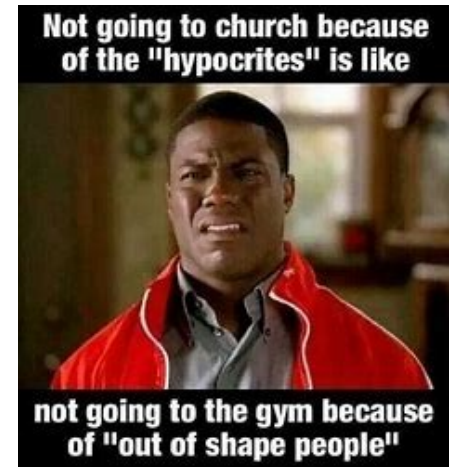
Central Conferences: In Africa, Europe and the Philippines, there are seven geographical regions, called central conferences, each of which is comprised of annual conferences and divided into several episcopal areas.

Annual Conferences: The annual conference is a geographical entity, an organizational body (made up of an equal number of elected lay and clergy members), and a yearly meeting. It is the fundamental body of the church (*Book of Discipline*, ¶ 11). Spruce Pine UMC is in the Western North Carolina Conference which supports more than 950 churches and nearly 300,000 members. On a side note, there are two annual conferences in North Carolina – The North Carolina Conference and the Western North Carolina Conference.

Districts: Each local church is part of a district, which is an administrative grouping of churches in a geographic area. Our annual conference comprises of eight districts. Our church is part of the Blue Ridge District is made up of 134 churches in Mitchell, Yancey, Madison, Buncombe, McDowell, Rutherford, Polk, Henderson and Transylvania counties. Currently, the Rev. Mark Ralls is our District Superintendent. The District office is located in Asheville.

Charge Conferences and Local Churches: As the visible presence of the body of Christ, the local church is the place where members grow in faith and discipleship, putting their faith into action through ministry in the world. Each year, churches hold Charge Conferences to approve an annual church budget, officially elect leaders, and appoint people to serve on various committees to facilitate each church's mission and ministry.

UNITED METHODIST MEMES



Did You Know?

- The goal of the Western North Carolina Conference is to increase the vitality of the Church by expanding our reach throughout the community.
- Conference leadership is to be comprised of these foundations: respect, cooperation, intentional honesty, openness, flexibility, and a servant's heart and mind with care and integrity and accountability for work and actions. What a great "method" for local church leadership.
- The Western North Carolina Conference was formed in 1890 from portions of the Holston Conference and the North Carolina Conference.



May Calendar

2nd - SPUMC Book Club - Parlor - 10:00 am
4th - National Day of Prayer
6th - Friends of the Library Meeting - Fellowship Hall - 1-3:30 pm
7th - Townhall style meeting - 4:00 - 5:30 pm - Sanctuary
8th - UMW/UWIF Meeting - 3pm - Welcome Center
11th - Finance Committee - 5:30 pm - Fellowship Hall
14th - Mother's Day
17th - Wonderful Wednesday, 6:00 pm - Fellowship Hall
18th - Trustees Meeting - 6:30 pm - Fellowship Hall
28th - Day of Pentecost
29th - Memorial Day

May Birthdays

3 - David Misicka	20 - Grace Buchanan	28 - Mary John Dye
8 - Lila Baskin	23 - Alice Houser	30 - Jan Banta
19 - Nelle Glenn	24 - Cole Martin	31 - Wayne Henline

May Anniversaries

10 - Josh & Jennifer Newton	22 - Sam & Jenell Young
12 - Tim & Sharon Drum	26 - Ed & Jan Banta
15 - Cole & Melissa Martin	27 - Tim II & Kristen Drum

Thanks to:

- The Trustees, Ron Allen, Matt Hollifield and all working on the Welcome Center!
- Everyone working with Lamplighters!
- The Care & Fellowship Team who is sponsoring the Wonderful Wednesday Meal.
- 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 took part in the mission trip to Kentucky!
- 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

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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 - 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
March 2023 - 95
April 2023 - 30

2023 Total - 381

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE UPDATE

Thanks to your generosity we
have helped 10 families and in-
dividuals with projects totaling
\$3,731.15 in April 2023.

Since 2013, we have helped
families and individuals with
projects totaling \$286,777.61
through community assistance.