



EBENEZER

United Methodist Church

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Special Note

Time Change

Move your clocks
ahead **ONE HOUR** on
Sunday morning,
March 12th for
Daylight Savings Time,
or the Saturday night
before.

Sunday Services

- 9:00a Worship Service
- 10:15a Sunday School
- 6:00p Adult Choir Practice
- 7:00p Every **FOURTH SUNDAY** United Methodist Women

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” *Matthew 28:19*



Pastor's Note



How is it with your soul?”

I keep asking you this question. It is foundational to who we are as Methodist Christians. It was the question John Wesley asked his people and had them ask each other in the early class meetings. Over the course of time we got away from asking each other that question. We do ask each other how we are doing and the usual answer is “fine.”

We need to reclaim our question. I believe that because I see a world where people are hurting in their souls as evidenced by the increase in violence among our teens and young adults. I see the hurt by the increase in gun violence. I see the hurt in the increase in drug addiction. I see the hurt in the increase in suicides. I see the hurt in the number of grandparents raising their grandchildren. I see the hurt in our political disfunction. I see the hurt in the language we use to talk about anything these days.

The church is not a social service agency, although we do things that can be considered that work as we feed the hungry and provide space for a blood drive. Other congregations do other things for the people in need in their communities. The church is a soul agency. We are concerned about the soul of everyone. A soul that is at peace, spiritually nourished, and supported by the body of Christ is a soul that we be less likely to harm themselves or someone else.

I encourage you to take care of your souls by the following spiritual practices:

- ◆ Read the Bible. Find a plan that works for you. Be consistent. Set aside time each day.
- ◆ Pray. Find time to spend with God in order to hear the still, small voice of God. Pray for others.
- ◆ Attend worship. Jesus commands us to gather in corporate worship. Worship is central to our life together, and to our life in God.
- ◆ Find a small group of people to study the scriptures and support one another. We offer Sunday School and Wednesday night Bible study. We also have prayer group, class meeting, senior citizens group, and women's group where you can

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WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

- 6:00p Praise Band Rehearsal
- 7:00p Bible Study – Adults.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Mon.–Friday: 8:30–1:00 p.m.
Phone: (828) 396-2214



Meetings, etc.

Prayer Group

Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. our weekly prayer group meets. You may call the office or email us prayer requests at ebenezerumc@yahoo.com.

Wesley Class Meeting

Class meets on **Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.**

Food Ministry

Next meal will be on **Monday, March 20** at 5:00 p.m. Drivers need to arrive by 4:30 p.m. Cook's helpers, see Ricky Baker for when to arrive.

Seniors Gathering

Our Senior citizens are invited to another morning of fellowship with meal on **Tuesday, March 21 at 11:00 a.m.** Meal will be provided by the church. Bring a dessert to share if you can.

Church Council

The Council will meet on Sunday, **March 26 at 4:00 p.m.**

UMW Meeting

The Women will have their annual membership drive meeting on **Sunday, March 26 at 6:00 p.m.** Current members will provide a pot-luck meal for the group.



A Gracious Reminder

When you wish to have a former pastor to return to conduct a funeral or wedding, please contact Pastor Alan first. It is his responsibility to extend the invitation to them as per the protocols of the UMC. The same holds true for other pastors regardless of their denomination. This avoids opportunities for miscommunication. Thank you!

Something to Pray About

by Cindy Sears

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. — 1 John 2:9-10 NIV

LOVE OR ELSE?

References John 13:34-35; NIV Application Commentary: John by Gary M. Barge, pp. 386-387

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” --John 13:34-35 NIV

Can a person be commanded to love?

“The love command puts in abstract words what Jesus meant in 13:14 when he told his disciples to wash one another’s feet...Unless one has a profound experience of being loved, it is virtually impossible to express profound love for another.” (Barge, p. 386)

It is our experience of being loved by Christ so much that he died on the cross for us—for me—that opens up the well of loving that can then be given to other love thirsty souls in the church and in the world.

This love command has often been used to “increase the work of the church in the world” by saying that it is a command to love everyone (p. 387). “But Jesus is talking specifically about how we love one another within his church (p. 387).”

This can be difficult when we are called to stand for truth, for doctrinal truth, and we see our fellow Christians and church members being led astray by the culture and even by our church leaders. Yet, we must love as Jesus loved. Part of our reason for pointing out error is love for God’s truth, as well as, his love. Even in our disagreements, we must strive to point out truth in a loving way, and never write someone off as hopeless or treat them as less than human.

In spite of our differences, when a stranger steps into our church, the first impression should be that we love one another with a genuine love. We do not just share an interest or goal, but love one another and, therefore, are willing to sacrifice time, effort, and money to help one another in this fallen world of sin, corruption, and pain.

“...it is the mandate of the church to become a community of love, a circle of Christ’s followers who invest in one another because Christ has invested in them, who exhibit love not based on the mutuality and attractiveness of its members, but on the model of Christ, who washed the feet of everyone (including Judas) (p. 387).”



March Events

Blood Drive

Monday
March 13th
2:30—7:00 p.m.

(Postponed from an earlier date.)

PLEASE NOTE: If you are unable or prefer not to sign up for this drive online, please call our office at 828-396-2214 to let us know you are coming, so the Red Cross will not cancel the drive again.

Our annual winter blood drive returns. Soup and sandwiches will be served to our donors, workers, and volunteers for free.

Please visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: Ebenezer UMC to schedule an appointment.

You can streamline your donation experience and save up to 15 minutes by visiting RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions on the day of your appointment.

Volunteers are needed in the kitchen and elsewhere. See Irene Austin or Bleaka Hollar for more information.

Special Thanks

Praise to the Lord, and a great big THANK YOU to our members and community for helping us to pay off our roof loan so quickly. We made the final payment in February. We also thank all our regular tithers and givers who continue to fund our church and its ministries.

Poor Man's Supper Plus Arts and Crafts Show

Saturday, Mar. 25
4:00—7:00 PM



Our Women's group is sponsoring a Poor Man's Supper with an Arts and Crafts Show, too.

Come in for a plate of pinto beans, cornbread, and all the fixin's! You choose the amount to pay us for the food.

We invite local artists and craftsmen to display and sell their wares during this event. They keep their proceeds, though we would appreciate a small donation.

Come in and enjoy a good meal, and shop for a unique gift for yourself or a friend.

The Women's group proceeds will go toward our disaffiliation costs.

We thank you for your support.



March Celebrations



- 1st—Charlie Mullinax
6th—Gary Campbell
7th—Kim Knepp
8th—Judy McCrary
10th—Bryan Turner
11th—Savanna Creaseman
13th—Clair Gilbert
14th—Wayne Ellis
14th—Jerry Helton
16th—Rachel Kersey
16th—Sarah Christas
17th—Jimmy Stone
20th—Tracy McRary
25th—Jordan Ellis
28th—Amanda Coffey
29th—Cindy Sears
30th—Shawn Baker

Happy Anniversary

- 2nd—Patty & Kyle Toliver
24th—Dylan & Vicky Baker

Our Military

Ricky Garland
Shane McRary
Jamie Mullinax



Please pray for the men and women who protect our freedoms.

Special Notice

We have a medical equipment closet at our church with walkers, wheelchairs, shower chairs, potty chairs, and crutches and canes. These are available for loan to those in need—no charge. If you have such equipment at home that you no longer need, you can donate them to the closet.



Church Council—February 26, 2023

Attendees: Pastor Alan, Irene Austin, Rosanna Bachman, Ricky Baker, Becky Clark, Ted Daniel, Kim Ellis, Roy Hamby, Bleaka Hollar, JoAnn Knepp, John McCrary, Judy McCrary, Marsha McRary, Linda Moretz, Cindy Sears and Rachel Kersey, Kenny Silver.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 4:17-18; Romans 12:1-2. “No longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God...” “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (NIV)

Marsha called for us to be in thoughtful prayer and prayerful thought. Do not let our emotions control us, but stand upon God’s Word and his promises of support to those who believe in him and follow his will. Marsha gave the opening prayer.

Minutes were read and approved with minor corrections.

Financial Report – Irene Austin

We barely brought in enough to cover our expenditures for the last month. We appreciate the special designations that we receive, but we need to make sure that we are funding the General Fund to help us keep our lights on and the bills paid. Please pray and give to the General Fund first, then designate as led to the other funds, such as Action-MISC (for disaffiliation expenses), Capital Improvement (for building improvements), and Missions, etc. Motion to approve the report by Rosanna, second by Linda.

Trustees Report – Ricky Baker

Fire alarm system needs a new dialer installed. The Trustees are checking into the cost for replacement. A new cd player/recorder has been ordered to replace

the one in the sanctuary that has been acting up.

Sunday School Report – Marsha McRary

Marsha’s class has increased slightly, and experienced better attendance. The middle/high school class is continuing to be well attended also.

Pastor’s Report

Pastor Alan asked us about the needs we have observed in the Dudley Shoals Community. Some thoughts expressed were: drug abuse, people who do not want to work or cannot hold a job because of drug abuse or laziness, etc., kids having to be raised by grandparents, poverty, lack of public transportation, parents not taking proper care of their children for various reasons, including drug abuse. Pastor Alan reminded us that we are not mental health or social service providers. There are professionals for that. But we can and should offer the Gospel News about Jesus Christ to all. He is the best and ultimate foundation for a better life here, and eternal life beyond. No matter what our church does in the future related to the UMC, our mission and ministry will continue in Dudley Shoals.

Concerning Disaffiliation: It was brought to Pastor Alan’s attention that some of our congregation may not agree with disaffiliation, and therefore not want any of their tithe to go toward that process. The Council considered this in relation to the Council’s previous vote to set aside one percent of our General Fund to the special fund created to pay for items related to disaffiliation. After some discussion, Cindy made a motion to no longer withhold the one percent, but request

that people who want to help fund our disaffiliation process to continue to designate part of their giving to the Action-MISC fund set aside for this purpose. Second by Rosanna and Judy. Motion passed. We were reminded again that our members should give first to the General Fund to help us keep our bills paid; then give to any other fund they wish using the Other section on the contribution envelopes. Thank you.

Concerning Bible Retirement:

To determine how large a box we will need for this, we will set up a collection box in the old fellowship hall. Bibles and hymnals or devotional books that are falling apart can be placed there within the next few months. We will have a box built, and have an interment for the items later this year.

Pastor Alan went over our **membership** numbers. Kim gave him the phone number for one person he needs to contact about her membership. We also need information on Patsy Fowler. We will send out more second notification letters later this year. Pastor Alan is preparing follow up letters for those who requested that we keep them on the roll, but they have not started attending or giving again.

Safe Sanctuary Training has been set for Saturday, April 22 at 9:00 a.m.

We will be collecting ready-to-eat food items for CCC&TI students to be donated in April. See note on p. 3.

Pastor Alan requested that we designate the Thank Bank offerings from the Lent Season to go to UMCOR for their benevolences work (disaster help). Kim made a motion to do so, second by Bleaka. Motion passed.



Council Minutes, cont'd

(Continued from page 4)

Pastor Alan shared a copy of the letter that he sent to Bishop Carter requesting more transparency in the cost of disaffiliation related to the "unfunded pension liability." He provided a copy of the response from DS Lory Beth Huffman in which it is stated that the amount varies according to the stock market, but will be around 4-8 times the yearly apportionments amount for our church.

Easter service is confirmed for 7:00 a.m. with breakfast to follow. Daylight savings time begins on March 12th this year. March worship information and other dates to remember are in the next 2 columns.

New Business

Rachel Kersey was recognized by the Chairperson. She and her sister Sarah Christas, who have a wedding planning business, requested the use of our cooler to store flowers for 2 to 3 days a week during the middle of the week. They will pay us for \$50 a day, plus \$25 per day over 2 days of storage. Signs will always be posted to make sure her items are not taken by anyone else. Kim made a motion to agree to grant this request, second by Judy. Motion passed.

Bleaka Hollar said that the Women's group is planning a **Poor Man's Supper for Saturday, March 25, 4-7:00 p.m.** Pinto beans, cornbread, etc. will be offered for donations. There will be an Arts and Crafts Show at the same time. Those showing the items keep their own profits, though we would be glad to accept a donation. Proceeds for the church will go to the Action-MISC fund.

We were reminded that we have a growing collection of wheel chairs, canes, walkers, etc. here at the

church that are available to anyone who needs them free of charge. Please see Cindy in the office of Pastor Alan if you or a friend or neighbor need to use an item.

Trustees additional information: The heating function and its squeak has been fixed on the heat pump in the CLC.

Roy Hamby gave the closing prayer. Minutes recorded by Cindy Sears.

Pastor's Note, cont'd

find support.

- ◆ Find a mission to be involved with. Get beyond your own needs and problems. Helping others can be a great way to grow our souls.

I will ask again: How is it with your soul? What can you do during this Lenten season to grow your soul? What can you do during this Lenten season to help others grow their souls?

In God's grace,
Pastor Alan

March Worship Information

- *Mar 5:* Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 (Communion)
- *Mar 12:* Romans 5:1-11
- *Mar 19:* Ephesians 5:8-14
- *Mar 26:* Romans 8:6-11

How do I hide God's word in my heart? Memorize it!

*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
—Romans 12:2a NIV*

Ministry Opportunities

Thank Bank Offering – UMCOR

During the season of Lent the Thank Bank offering will go to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) for their work with disaster relief here and around the world.

CCC & TI Food Ministry

In April we have been asked to collect single serving size foods for the food ministry at CCC & TI. This can include microwavable macaroni and cheese, ramen, crackers, granola bars, pop tarts, cereal bowls, etc... This is a ministry supported by our Missional Network which is made up of all the United Methodist churches of Caldwell County.

SCCM Food Pantry

We collect canned and boxed foods for South Caldwell Christian Ministries Food Pantry throughout the year. Please place on the bench in the old fellowship hall.

Other Dates to Know

- ◆ Daylight Savings Time Change, *March 12th*
- ◆ Easter Sunday, *April 9th*, Service at 7:00 a.m., then breakfast
- ◆ Caldwell Spring Break, *April 10-14*
- ◆ Ashton's graduation, *May 5th*
- ◆ On-line Annual Conference session, *May 6th* (about disaffiliation)
- ◆ Pastor's Vacation, *May 25-30*
- ◆ Annual Conference, *June 15-18*

We will also have Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services during Easter Holy Week. More information will be in the April newsletter.