



EBENEZER

United Methodist Church

www.ebenezerum-church.org

May '23

Volume 19 Issue 5

Church's e-mail: ebenezerumc@yahoo.com

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“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



I like to read. I usually have at least three books going at any one time. Sometimes more. I use a Kindle Paperwhite as it is easier on the eyes. The main categories of books that I will have in rotation at any time are works of fiction, theology, and history. Right now the fiction one is *The Pickwick Papers* by Charles Dickens. The current work of theology is a *collected works of Tertullian*. I read a history book for pleasure like some may read crime novels or romances. Currently, I am reading *The Fatal Shore* which tells the story of the settlement of Australia.

My preaching professor in seminary, Fred Craddock, encouraged us to read. He especially wanted us to read “good fiction.” The reason was two-fold. The first was to experience how language can be used to tell the story of the Bible. The second reason was to make sure we were constantly filling ourselves with new images and concepts so that the sermon well did not go dry.

Recently, our nation has seen a rise in book banning. Generally I am against the banning of books from our schools and libraries. One of the reasons I read as widely as I can is to be exposed to new, different, and even dangerous ideas. I understand that not every book is appropriate at every age, and I would encourage everyone to read books that are under consideration for banning so that you can make up your own minds about if it is appropriate for a certain age group. Considering how reading scores are going in this nation it seems that getting people to read is important.

John Wesley said that Methodist Christians were “people of the book.” I appreciate how many of you take seriously the reading of the Bible daily. If you aren't reading the Bible daily, I would encourage you to make it a part of your spiritual discipline. However, there are parts of the Bible that could get it banned in some places. There are stories of fratricide (Cain and Abel), mass murder, rape (the story of Tamar), inappropriate sexual behavior including adultery (David and Bathsheba) and then the deliberate murder of her husband. The Bible is not a pure, spiritual book. It is a record of our failures time after time after time. It is also a record of God's anger towards us and our behaviors as well as a record of God's grace.

When you read the Bible, you will come to parts that encourage you, confuse

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Announcement:

Pastor Alan has been appointed to Ebenezer UMC for another year of service.

Sunday Services

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

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, May 15** 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, May 16 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, **May 28 at 4:00 p.m.**

UMW Meeting

The Women will have their annual membership drive meeting on **Sunday, May 28 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



“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God.”
— John 14:16-17a GNT

References: John 14:22-24; Interpreter's Bible, vol. 8, pp.710-711

Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “Lord, how can it be that you will reveal yourself to us and not to the world?”

Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and my Father and I will come to them and live with them.”—John 14:23 GNT

“Our heart the home of God! The door into which Christ turns with the restful feeling that he is in his own place, where love will meet him and surround him, where he is at home.” (I.B. p. 710)

Can there be a greater gift of assurance that God loves those who love him? His indwelling of the believer is beyond imagining. God, as the Holy Spirit, dwells in us who accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord. He has come to call everyone to repentance, to his own, yet they receive him not—or ignore him, or delay turning their lives over to him. And one day it will be too late to do so. Flung the door to your heart wide open to Jesus now! Don't worry about the mess on the couch, the dirty dishes in the kitchen sink, the dust bunnies under the bed, the dingy windows—Jesus wants to dwell with you. After you invite him in there will be plenty of time with his help to put your house in order. Open the door!

“Listen! I stand at the door and knock; if any hear my voice and open the door, I will come unto their house and eat with them, and they will eat with me.”—Revelation 3:20 GNT

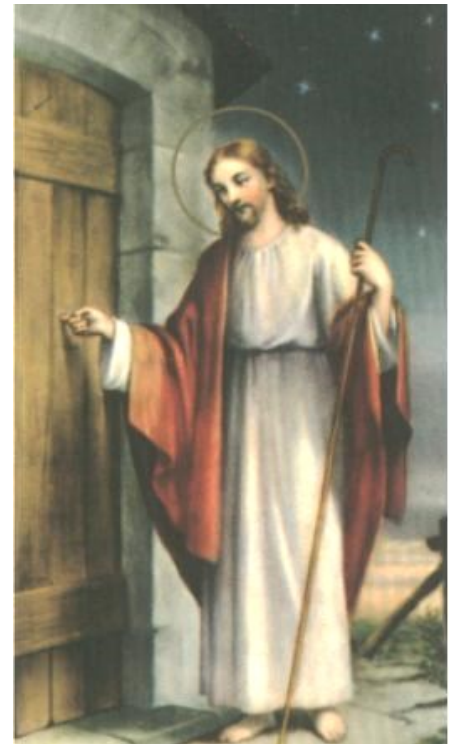
(This article will be placed on Ebenezer's website as Mini-Bible lesson #66.)



May 28

Is **Pentecost Sunday.**

Don't forget to wear RED or some other fiery color as we celebrate the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Church.





May Events

Community Yard Sale

Saturday, May 6

7:00 AM—Noon

We invite community and church members to rent a table for \$10 and sale their personal used items (you keep the proceeds) at our Community Yard Sale.

Our Women’s group will have breakfast biscuits for sale, and later in the morning, hot dogs, for our visitors. Proceeds from food sales and table rent will go to our Action Fund to help us in the process of leaving the United Methodist Church organization.

Mother’s Day Display and Celebration

Sunday, May 14

9:00 AM

We are asking our members to help us set-up a display table with **mementos of our mothers** to honor them on Mother’s Day. Bring in small items or photos that remind you of your mother (before May 14).

Please label the items. All items will be returned.



April Worship Information

- *May 7th* – 1 Peter 2:2-10 (Communion Sunday)
- *May 14th* – 1 Peter 3:13-22 (Mother’s Day)
- *May 21st* – 1 Peter 4:12-14; & 5:6-11
- *May 28th* – Roy Hamby Preaches (Pentecost Sunday—Wear red or orange if you can.)

Other Dates to Know

- ◆ 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*



John Wesley Said:

“Reading Christians are growing Christians. When Christians cease to read, they cease to grow.”

“In all cases, the Church is to be judged by the Scripture, not the Scripture by the Church.”

May Celebrations



- 8th—Marsha McRary
- 12th—Paul Burson III
- 12th—Heather Helton Wallace
- 13th—Ricky Baker
- 13th—Meredith K. Starnes
- 14th—Carolyn F. Davis
- 15th—Darren McCrary
- 24th—Gavin Bachman
- 27th—David Bachman
- 29th—Ted Daniel

Happy Anniversary

- 4th—George & Sarah Christas
- 4th—Parker & Rachel Kersey
- 25th—Alan & Debbie Gaylord
- 30th—Monte & Bleaka Hollar

Our Military

Ricky Garland
Shane McRary
Jamie Mullinax



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

Graduation Sunday

We will honor our graduates on **Sunday, May 21st**. We know of one high school graduate. If you know of other graduates (high school or college), please let us know, and send us pictures and information about the graduate, the school/college, degree, and plans for the future.





Church Council—April 23, 2023

Attendees: Pastor Alan Gaylord, Irene Austin, Rosanna Bachman, Ricky Baker, Becky Clark, Kim Ellis, Roy Hamby, Bleaka Hollar, JoAnn Knepp, John McCrary, Judy McCrary, Marsha McCrary, Linda Moretz, Cindy Sears.

Our devotional reading came from James 1:19-21, 26-27. “quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.” We are called to speak truth, but with kindness and gentleness. We can be angry against sin but must be careful about how we express that anger. We can use it as energizing source to stand up for God and truth (God is Truth); but should not hold onto anger or use it to belittle others. “If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.” Marsha gave the opening prayer.

Reading of the March meeting minutes: Accepted as written; first by Kim, second by Linda. Passed.

Financial Report – Irene Austin

Same bad news. Our contributions are behind our spending. Irene is preparing to borrow money from the designated funds to keep our bills paid. Pastor Alan said that we can use the Capital Improvements fund for building repairs; and part of the Cemetery Fund can be used to help with the lawn service payments, since the most time and labor-consuming part of that is the mowing and weed-eating of the cemetery area. The Action-MISC designated funds should be used only for disaffiliation needs; though money put there from fundraisers could be shifted and paid back later. Discussion.

Bottom line, we need more contributions and contributors.

Trustees Report – Ricky Baker

Ricky is going to fix one bathroom problem this coming week. Members of the council brought up a few other items about loose toilet paper holders, need for a replacement bulb upstairs, and a loose kick-stand on a lobby area door.

Marsha, as Sunday School Superintendent, reported full children’s and youth classes this Sunday. Wonderful! Let’s pray that the children and youth will continue to come regularly.

SPPRC Report

He gave his report during the worship service: Pastor Alan has been reappointed to Ebenezer for another year. Roy Hamby has been appointed as a Local Pastor to another church. He will start his service in July. We ask there our church be in prayer for both these pastors this year.

Pastor’s Report

Re: Mission and Vision. Pastor Alan asked the Council what being a member of Ebenezer meant; and what is expected from our members. Answers given were that members are those who have specifically requested to join our church body, and have made vows to attend, give, and participate in our ministries. There are attendees who act like members, and are considered a part of our family. Actions that verify true membership include attendance, participation in activities and ministries of our church, regular giving, prayers for our church, and attendance at various Bible study classes and groups. The question then asked of those members who

are not doing any of these things is: Are you taking your vows seriously?

Our **membership** number stands at 171, but follow-up letters will be sent later this year to those people who requested to remain on our roll, but have not attended or given or made any effort to become a participant in our ministries. Pastor Alan estimates that 30-40 more names will be dropped from the roll during this year’s charge conference.

Pastor Alan would like to have telephone numbers for the following people: Patsy Fowler, Amber Moore, Larry Shook. He needs addresses for: Ricky Lyda and Melinda Tolbert.

Our **Lenten Offering for UMCOR** was \$494.93. Thank you to everyone who gave so generously to this cause.

Graduate Recognition: Cole McCrary appears to be our only graduate this year. Graduation Sunday is set for May 21st. If there are any other graduates (high school or college), please contact Pastor Alan or the church office and provide photos, school name, degree, and plans for the future for each student.

Pastor Alan will have **youth programs** again this summer. The activities will be held on Wednesdays in June and July.

May worship information is included in the newsletter, along with the dates that Pastor Alan will be away for vacation and the Annual Conference.

Old Business

We have collected quite a few old Bibles and hymnals, etc. for retirement. We will set the date for a retirement ceremony and burial of these items later this year.

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Council Minutes, cont'd

(Continued from page 4)

New Business

Marsha passed out copies of the letter she has written to be sent to our District Superintendent, Rev. Lori Beth Huffman, to tell her that we intend to pursue disaffiliation from the UMC, and why. The Council approved the letter with first and second motions by Irene Austin and Ricky Baker. This letter starts the clock on our disaffiliation. The D. S. will be setting the date for the special charge conference to have a vote taken within our church to approve or not to disaffiliate from the UMC. This process can be stopped at any time if we do not meet the requirements or take the necessary steps for disaffiliation.

Discussion followed on how to announce our intentions to the community at large and explain why we have chosen to leave the United Methodist Church organization, and why we must pay a large sum of money to the UMC to be able to retain our property. After the letter has been sent to the District Superintendent and answered, we can begin letting the people know that we have “entered into the disaffiliation process.”

One council member suggested a “townhall” open to our church body and the community to share information about this decision and the process, and to let people ask questions. We also hope to get the local community to rally around us and help us with the cost of this transition. We will be looking into other ways and means to get their help. Above all we request that everyone of our members and friends continue to pray for us.

Linda Moretz closed the meeting with prayer.

Minutes by Cindy Sears. 

Pastor's Note, cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

you, cause you to think and reflect and even parts that are dry as any desert. Yet, as I read and reread our book, I find new things within it as God reveals new understandings for my life. Please read the Bible. It is our book. It will change your life and grow your faith in very surprising ways.

In God's grace,
Pastor Alan

Ministry Opportunities

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.

Ebenezer UMC's General Fund

Don't forget that your church needs your monetary support, too! Our contributions are not keeping up with our spending on essentials, such as electricity, repairs, water, apportionments, insurance, etc. Please remember to give. God will bless you and us for your generosity. Thank you.



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

My dear brothers take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

—James 1:19-20 NIV

In the Summertime

Pastor Alan will have special meetings and activities for young people of our church and community this summer.

A schedule is being set at this time. Meetings will be on Wednesdays in June and July. Paperwork must be filled out by a parent or guardian for the young people who wish to participate. Please contact Pastor Alan or the church office for the permission forms.

Schedule and activity information will be in the June newsletter.

Thank You

We received a thank you note from South Caldwell Christian Ministries for 77.0 pounds of food that our members donated to their food pantry. Thank you for supporting this ministry to the families of Caldwell County.

Through April we have been collecting single serving snacks, canned meats, soup, and mac & cheese items for students at CCC&TI. The bench with the items is overflowing. We thank everyone who has helped to make this drive a success, too!



Special Giving

We gratefully acknowledge the following special gifts:

In memory of Bob Jenkins by Peggy Jenkins;

In honor of Bleaka Hollar by Gary G. Reid.



A Little Bit of Fun

