

Tower Tidings

Where Everybody's Welcome, Nobody's Perfect

S PIRIT MATTERS

The itinerant system is the accepted method of The United Methodist Church by which ordained elders . . . are appointed by the bishop to fields of labor. All ordained elders . . . shall accept and abide by these appointments.

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016 ¶ 338

The first call goes something like this, “Jim, this is Dawn (DS for the South District), expect a call from another district superintendent about an appointment.” And the second call begins, “Jim, this is BK Chung, DS in the West District. The bishop would like to appoint you to serve Palmyra through the ministry of First United Methodist Church.” So begins the process of relocating from Springfield in Delaware County to Palmyra in Lebanon County.

People sometimes wonder what it's like to serve under the appointment of a bishop, never knowing exactly when or where you will move to next. For me, it is just a way of life, a way of life I learned as a child when, at the direction of the bishop, my family moved from Cornwell's Heights in Bucks County, to Frankford in Philadelphia, and then to a town you may have heard of called Lebanon.

I also don't think much about the fact that United Methodist pastors don't have a lot of control over their location, because we are not the only ones who cede control to employers. When I was in retail management the company determined where my next store would be located, not me.

Some may ask, “why do we do it this way, when other churches get to call their own pastors and give the congregation a say in who the new pastor will be?” The reason is our belief that the bishop and appointment cabinet (made up of the District Superintendents) are in a better position to understand the needs of the congregations, as well as the gifts and graces of the pastors throughout the conference.

I've seen the system work and work well. When I was appointed to serve Salem UMC in beautiful downtown Aquashicola, I had no idea where the place even was and it would not have been on my radar. Yet, the things I could bring to the church and learn from the people were a blessing to all of us. In each of my appointments, I have learned and grown while serving God's people. I trust the Holy Spirit to guide the bishop and cabinet in the appointment process. I also trust that I have something to offer Palmyra and that Palmyra First Church can teach me things that will make my ministry more effective. These things make me very grateful to be serving God and all God's people in western Lebanon and Eastern Dauphin Counties through the ministry of Palmyra First United Methodist Church.

Grace & Peace, Pastor Jim

September
2019

Palmyra First United Methodist Church

Connections

Worship Services at Palmyra First

September means we are returning to a more “normal routine;” back to school, back to church, back to our K Groups (see related article on K Groups). It also is a wonderful time to begin new routines. In our worship services we are planning a few very special events. Below is a summary of what is in store for you in September at Palmyra First United Methodist Church.

September 1st is Labor Day Weekend. If you are planning a family picnic invite the family to join you at our non-traditional service at 9:00 AM. We'll have you on your way in plenty of time to fire up the grill and burn some burgers for lunch. If you want to sleep in a bit, come to the 10:30 AM Traditional service and you can still light the grill before noon!

As a first Sunday of the month we will be celebrating the sacrament of Holy Communion as we give thanks for all that Jesus has done to reconcile us to God. Our message will focus on Christians as a welcoming people. Our scriptures for the day will be taken from both Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16 and Luke 14:1, 7-14.

September 8th we will be reading Paul's letter to Philemon. The book is only one chapter – 25 verses, but there is a lot of good information to consider. The message will center on “Doing the Right Things for the Right Reasons.”

September 15th our scriptures will be taken from Luke 15:1-10. Jesus addresses the complaints of the Pharisees and scribes by telling three short parables about things that are lost. In the stories the one who lost something rejoices when the lost is found. Do you rejoice when the lost are found. Are you helping others to find their way, or are you content to see them wander through life?

September 22nd we will turn our attention to prayer. Specifically, we will be talking about who we should be praying for and why. In today's contentious society it would be interesting if every Christian followed Paul's advice. Our scriptural text will be taken from 1 Timothy 2:1-7.

September 29th we will be looking at a story set in a very troubled time in the life of Judah. A modern-day interpretation of the story may find us being offered a piece of ground next to the World Trade Center on September 10, 2011, knowing what was going to happen on September 11th. Would you buy the land? In a similar situation Jeremiah bought the land. We will explore why he did what he did and what it says to us in the year 2019. Our scripture is Jeremiah 39:1-3a, 6-15.

October 6th is World Communion Sunday and our topic will revolve around communion. What does it mean, why do we celebrate the sacrament, who is eligible to receive? These and similar questions will be answered before we gather at the Lord's Table and partake with Christians around the world.

Studying The Word

New Study Opportunity on Sunday Mornings!

So, what is a K-Group anyway?

If you've been around PFUMC for any length of time, I'd bet you've heard the term K-Group used in announcements, the Connect First, and the Tower Tidings. But what are these groups anyway? "K-Groups" are PFUMC's term for small group ministry. The "K" stands for *koinonia*, the Greek word that means "fellowship."

A K-Group is a collection of folks that meet outside of regular church hours to study the Bible, get to know one another, and share life and prayer concerns together. Right now, PFUMC has several active groups. On Tuesday morning, we have our Ladies' Bible Study group. On Tuesday evening, a group meets at Rozella Wagner's home. Wednesdays, the Ryan's lead a group that meets at the Church in our Office Wing. And on Sundays, our Adult Sunday School group meets in Parish Hall during the 10:30 am service. An upcoming group is going to be formed on Sunday mornings that will meet during our 9:00 am service that will allow those who attend 10:30 am services to have a convenient small group option.

If you would like more information about small groups, use Discipleship@pfumc.us to contact Pastor Jason. Small groups are excellent opportunities to get to know your church family better, learn more about God and his Word, and take your discipleship to the next level. It's never too late to get connected! We hope you consider being part of a K-Group a priority in your Christian discipleship, by either joining an already existing group or creating a new one. You'll be glad you did!

Meet and Greet Opportunities

Since the middle of August Pastor Jim has been meeting with small groups of people to allow us to get to know each other a bit better. In these gatherings church members and friends can express their hopes and dreams for the future of the church, the needs they see within both the church and the community.

If you haven't yet had the chance to be a part of one of the gatherings now is the time to sign up. There are sign-up sheets in the narthex (located between the sanctuary and Seltzer Parish Hall) where you can check out the available times and places. If none of the times or places work for you, please consider hosting a group at a time and place that suits you. Locations can be in your home, a coffee shop, at the church, and even at Camp Seltzer. Locations are only limited by your imagination. To host a group please see Pastor Jim to coordinate the date and time.

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Getting to know the names and faces of several hundred new people is a daunting task, but modern technology can offer some assistance. Our new church data management program allows us to attach a profile picture to each individual, but in order to do that we need a picture! If you haven't done so already, please send a photo to Vickie Rimert in the church office. Her email address is admin@pfumc.us and she will upload the picture to your information page. The preference is for individual pictures of each member of the family. Selfies and other casual cell phone pictures are perfectly acceptable.

Extending the Table – Home Communion

Do you have a passion for extending the love of God to others? Do you enjoy visiting other people? Are you a good listener? Can you spare a few hours on the first Sunday of the month or the Monday after? If you answered yes to a few of the questions above, you may be just the right person to help “extend the communion table” to those who are “unwillingly absent” from worship?

Communion is one of the principal means of God’s grace. Unfortunately for some of our members and friends circumstances prevent them from attending worship on a communion Sunday. For those where this is a recurring problem the pastor attempts to take communion to such individuals several times a year. However, with the help of dedicated laypeople, we can extend the communion table to include more of God’s children each time we commune as a congregation.

If you have an interest in serving or just want to learn more about the program speak to Pastor Jim. He will be scheduling an information session followed by a training session so all the congregation can be served the sacrament. Please note that this ministry is a supplement to the visits done by the pastors and does not replace the traditional pastoral call.

Connection and Prayer Cards

Did you ever wonder why the pastor asks everyone to fill out a Connection and Prayer Card every week? Well, there is a simple answer. On Sunday morning the pastor has many things on his mind, especially as the service is about to begin. By filling out a card every time you are present the church office can record attendance. The attendance data helps us spot trends, see who is present and just as importantly see who is absent. The card also gives us information we need to follow up with visitors and guests to First Church.

But why should I fill it out if I’ve spoken to the pastor, obviously he knows I’m in worship. This may be true, but Jim’s memory is not always reliable. In addition, the recording of attendance is not done by the pastor himself. Also, your filling out a card will encourage others to do the same.

On the connection side remember, if your contact information has not changed all we need is the name; however, if contact information has changed completing this information alerts the church office and our records will be updated.

The prayer side of the card allows for direct communication of both joys and concerns to the pastor. As you list your joys and concerns be assured that the pastor will be sensitive and discreet with the information. As he puts the pastoral prayer together, he will maintain confidentiality while still praying for both situations and individuals. Of course, sometimes you may need to speak to the pastor directly. By indicating such a need on the card you can expect a follow up no later than Tuesday. Thanks for being willing to fill out the cards each week.

Confirmation Classes

As we head into the fall season Pastor Jim is preparing to start two new confirmation classes. One will be designed for youth who are interested in learning more about the Christian faith, United Methodism, and Palmyra First Church in particular. After the classes the youth will be ready to decide if they would like to openly profess faith in Jesus Christ as their own Lord and Savior. They also can decide if they would like to become a full professing member of the church with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of membership.

The second class will be geared for adults who have come to us from another faith tradition, never had a confirmation class, or would like to refresh their memory about their faith and the inner working of the church. If you are interested in either class, please let Pastor Jim know as soon as possible. The actual dates and times for the classes will be set based on the participants’ availability.

Opportunities for Service

United Methodist Women (UMW) News

UMW plans to meet to share supper together on Thursday Oct. 24th 5:30 pm in the Parish Hall. Since the Praise Band has practice at 6:30, they are invited to join us for dinner as our guests.

UMW is wrapping up our collection of school supplies for the United Methodist HUB. Thanks to everyone who contributed. These supplies will find their way to children, near and far, who need them in school or possibly in a disaster area or refugee camp.

UMW's third annual **Shower for Baby Jesus Breakfast** will be held Sat. Dec. 7 in the Parish Hall at 9am. Women and girls of the church and their guests are invited to join us for breakfast, to make a Christmas craft, and to bring donated baby items for Lebanon Family Health Services. Especially needed are booties, bibs and blankets. We will have a bin in Parish Hall if you wish to drop off your items early. This event is underwritten by Thrivent Financial.

Rise to the challenge..... Support Rise Against Hunger!!!

First United Methodist Church is excited to host our fourth **Rise Against Hunger** packing event on Saturday, **November 16**, in the church Parish Hall. Rise Against Hunger is driven by the vision of a world without hunger. Their mission is to end hunger in our lifetime by providing food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable and creating a global commitment to mobilize the necessary resources. Assembly line compilation of nutritious ingredients are packed into bags that will make a meal for six persons. These are packaged and stored until sent where the greatest needs exist. Between 9am and noon, 15,000 meals will be packed in an atmosphere of good spirits, a loud gong and a sense of satisfaction.

Your financial support will help us attain our goal of \$4385. Your physically being there to help will be welcome (and fun!).



Support Connections of Lebanon County is preparing for another class to begin in October. Currently meeting every Tuesday evening at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Lebanon, we have been helping low-income individuals and families since we began as Palmyra Circles in 2002. This relationship-based anti-poverty program has touched the lives of hundreds of people through our weekly meetings to help folks develop the knowledge, skills, goals and relationships they need to prosper.

How can you support SCLC?

Become a team mate. Team mates walk alongside our participants and are part of the supportive community that learns and grows together. No special skills are required – just a desire to be a friend and supportive partner in this journey to self-sufficiency. Talk to Lee Smedley or one of the other members of PFUMC who has been part of SCLC and plan to attend our orientation meeting on October 1.

Help recruit participants, or become one yourself. If you or someone you know is struggling and is committed to moving toward self-sufficiency, SCLC can help. Plan to attend the orientation meeting to find out how to get started on the road to a more stable life.

Volunteer with food service or child care.

Make a donation. We will be participating in the Palmyra Give, Sept 28th. You can also donate on-line or leave a check at the church office.

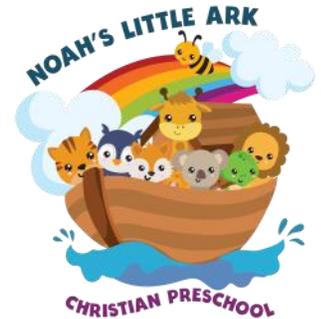
Learn more about SCLC at www.sclclebco.org or contact Lee at smedleylee@gmail.com 610-914-3846.

Reminder: Our next newsletter will be printed in October. Articles are **due by 9:00am on September 17**. Send news items to admin@pfumc.us

NOAH'S NEWS

We welcomed families to "Meet the Teacher" night on August 23 in preparation for the start of our new school year on September 3. Currently there are 127 children enrolled in our preschool programs and we are fully staffed with a team of enthusiastic teachers and aides who make learning exciting and fun for our children every day. Our year is packed full of extracurricular activities, many of which you could be a part of as a volunteer. If you would like to help out this school year, drop me a note and let me know your areas of interest. Some potential opportunities are: setup/serve at special events (i.e. Donuts with Grownups, Family Christmas programs, Muffins in the Morning); be a guest reader in one of our classrooms; supervise activities/hide eggs/prepare breakfast for our Bunny Breakfast; copy, cut, laminate classroom supplies, etc.

Noah's will be participating in Palmyra's Great Give Community Day on September 28. While donations can be made from September 14-29, on the 28th there will be a series of challenges that could provide opportunities for additional earnings. Mark your calendar and plan to support our efforts to raise funds to build our Scholarship fund.



Thank you, Connie Reitz Director

Coming Reads ---T.E.A. (Through Eyes of Another) women's book group at PFUMC



Our women's book group called T.E.A. is gearing up for another year of reading and discussing our chosen book of the month.

We are hoping some new readers will join us on Oct. 3rd in the church south wing at 7 pm to discuss *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*- by Gail Honeyman

Other coming books and dates include the following:

- Nov 7 - *Educated*- by Tara Westover
- Dec. 5- *Eclipse Lake* by Mae Claire- Christmas TEA and visit by the author
- Jan. 9- *Year of Biblical Womanhood* by Rachel Held Evans
- Feb. 6 - *The Matriarch* by Susan Page

T.E.A. originally was begun with books from the United Methodist Women's Reading Program. Our intention was to broaden our understanding of people whose life experiences are very different from ours. Over the years, we have added other resource book lists, but empathy for others remains a focus.

If you are a woman who enjoys reading, then sharing your perspective and listening to others' views on a book, please plan to join us. We will have fair trade tea available.

Knit Crochet and Pray looking for needle work- ers who want to put their skill to work for good purposes.



If you love to knit or crochet and would like to help others with your skill, this is the group for you. We meet once a month to get updates on the agencies we help and to say a prayer of blessing over our completed items. We also share patterns and ideas.

We make scarves, hats, mittens, baby blankets, lap blankets, prayer shawls and Peace Pal dolls. Agencies we help include Lebanon Family Health Services, Knitting4Peace, and the VA hospital, as well as making baby blankets for our church's baptized babies and prayer shawls for those we know are going through stressful times.

Bring your yarn projects, and join us in the church south wing for an hour of fellowship and needlework at 1 pm Sept. 25th and/or Oct. 30th.

If you'd like to know more talk with Karen Douds or Sally Smedley.

DO YOU GET OUR WEEKLY E-NEWS?

Sign-up by emailing discipleship@pfumc.us and say "E-News Please."



There you'll get weekly updates on worship and activities.

More PFUMC News

Hearing God, Topic of Autumn Study for Adult Sunday School

The adult Sunday School class/K-group that meets in the Parish Hall Sundays at 10:30 am will begin a new book study on September 8th, *Hearing God, Developing a Conversational Style with God* by Dallas Willard.

(from the book cover) “Being close to God means communicating with him—telling him what is on our hearts in prayer and hearing and understanding what he is saying to us. It is this second half of our conversation that is so important but can also be so difficult. How do we hear his voice? How can we be sure that what we think we hear is not our own subconscious? What role does the Bible play? What if what God says to us is not clear?...The author provides rich spiritual insight into how we can hear God’s voice clearly and develop an intimate partnership with him in the work of his kingdom.”

Our group would be delighted to include new participants in this 9 week study. Each week we’ll have a discussion based on the questions at the end of the chapter read the previous week. Books are available through Cokesbury, Amazon and other booksellers.



HONOR SOMEONE WITH ALTAR FLOWERS —

Open dates available. Month of Sept. 1, 15, 22, & 29, Oct. 6, 13, 20, & 27 Nov. 3, 10, 17 & 24 and Dec. 1, 8, 15, & 22.

Contact the church office (838-2551 ext. 201 or admin@pfumc.us) to reserve a Sunday.



Youth, Children & Family Ministries

Children's Ministries, Fall 2019

Children's Ministry continues to be blessed with amazing volunteers who are teaching and assisting during our Discovery Dunes on Sunday mornings at 9:00am. The curriculum we use each week covers Biblical stories, themed snack, hands-on craft projects, a global church connection, and good music and games. The Fall/Winter curriculum is focused on Loving God, Loving Your Neighbor and so we are spending time each Sunday exploring this theme.

We have worked on a Fall schedule for youth group that includes at least one group activity each month, with pop up groups possibly occurring as new events come up. We have planned a Back to School Jam, Pumpkin Painting, Christian Youth Group Glow Bowling and our 2nd annual event of baking for the Ronald McDonald House. Events are listed on Facebook and our webpage as well as a brochure that is hanging around the church. Please feel free to take one and share our events with family, friends or neighbors.

We are looking for help with our youth! We continue to grow and have more attendance both in church and youth group. If anyone is interested in helping out with youth group events or in Discovery Dunes, we can use you! Please continue to pray for our children, youth, and teacher/leaders. Thank you for your part in this aspect of our spiritual community.

Danielle Pulaski



FREE

Dinner & a Movie

"Breakthrough"

Sunday Sept 29, 2019

Dinner served 4:30pm, movie starts 5:30pm

(free childcare provided)

BREAKTHROUGH is based on the inspirational true story of one mother's unfaltering love in the face of impossible odds. When Joyce Smith's adopted son John falls through an icy Missouri lake, all hope seems lost. But as John lies lifeless, Joyce refuses to give up. Her steadfast belief inspires those around her to continue to pray for John's recovery, even in the face of every case history and scientific prediction. This is a moving retelling of an incredible story of faith over fear when everything and everyone around you says to give up. It shows us miracles still happen, and a powerful message of faith, hope, and love.

BREAKTHROUGH is a reminder of the immense power of prayer, and the awesome power of God.



FREE

Dinner & a Movie

"Run the Race"

Sunday Nov 24th, 2019

Dinner served 4:30pm, movie starts 5:30pm

Reeling from his mother's death and his father's abandonment, Zach, an All-State athlete, finds glory on the football field, working to earn a college scholarship and the brother's ticket out of town. When an devastating injury puts Zach and his dreams - on the sidelines, David laces up his track cleats to salvage their future and point Zach toward hope.

Every one of us has a race to run...and each of us faces surprising and sometimes huge challenges. "Run the Race" is a dynamic and inspiring film that shows the way to face the unexpected in life and how to rise triumphantly above them. Whether you're facing shattered dreams, doubts or fears this film will empower you to run hard into the steadfast love of God.