

The Sweet Spirit

Olive Branch United Methodist Church

April 2017



From The Pastor's Pen



From the pastor's pen

Greetings and Peace from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I hope this letter finds you healthy, blessed and full of the Holy Spirit and love of God.

I love Spring! Flowers are popping through the ground; buds are forming on the trees; grass is getting green; and the weeds are everywhere! As I look at the beauty of the flowers, trees, lawns, etc., it causes me to think about my faith and how I serve God.

Winter seems to dull our senses somewhat and allow us to become enveloped in well, let's say, less than exuberant worship and suppressed ambitions to serve God and loving and caring for each other.

But, that time is over and spring has sprung!

As we journey to the cross, let's look forward, leaving the blues and dulled senses behind and become excited again about God! Praise God for fresh flowers, fields of green vegetation, birds singing amongst new leaves on the trees, and a fresh spirit within us!

As we continue our journey with Jesus, to the cross and beyond, let's lift up our hearts, minds and spirits to praise God for His love for us, a love so great that He gave us Jesus! Give thanks for our biological, adopted, foster and church families, as we love and care for all God's people.

In Christian Love and In His Service,

Pastor Randy

God proved His love When Christ hung, and bled, and died, it was
God saying to the world, 'I love you.' Billy Graham

Just a Thought

“The cross was no after-thought from God Rev Joe McKeever

“No one is taking my life from me; I lay it down of my own accord.” (John 10:18)

“Now is the judgement of this world; now is the ruler of this world cast out.”

(John 12:31)

It was the moment Jesus had come for.

He was headed to the cross.

For Jesus, going to the cross was not Plan B.

God did not shake His head in disgust at mankind’s messing up His pretty plans and decide He would have to take drastic action. “This is not how I had planned it, but those pesky humans leave me no other choice!”

Didn’t happen.

God was not blindsided by mankind’s sin nor thwarted by our human frailties. “Okay, heavenly host—engage backup plan. Everyone—Plan B!”

Did not happen.

The Lord knew from the beginning what He had and what He was dealing with.

“He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust” (Psalm 103:14).

Now, that raises a lot of questions to which I have no answers. If He knew, why did He do this? If He knew, why didn’t He do that? I don’t know. I have trouble enough trying to figure out my own motivations for actions and inactions, let alone God’s.

What was God thinking to make such a marvelous creature capable of both glory and mischief at the same time?

And how does it happen that He knew all this and went ahead anyway? We are not told.

“Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?” (Romans 11:34)

Suffice it to say God knew what He was doing.

“Known only to Him are the great hidden secrets,” said the wonderful old gospel song. And another said, “We’ll talk it over in the bye and bye. I’ll ask the reasons; He’ll tell me why...”

Scripture tells us that Jesus Christ is “the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8).

Whatever else that means, I take it to say that throughout the centuries in the past, present, and future, the benefits of the cross (of what Jesus accomplished there) are a reality. After all, God does not dwell within the same time frame we do. The eternal present is how some put it.

Consider also that at the Judgment, believers are told: “Come, ye blessed of the Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34).

Clearly, God has been making plans a long, long time.

Our welfare has been uppermost in His mind from the beginning, it would appear.

Therefore, since the cross was the main thrust of God’s plan from the beginning...

One. How dare we think anyone will be saved by any other method.

Two. How dare we think our works will get us to Heaven.

Three. How dare we glory in anything except in the cross of Christ by whom the world is crucified unto us and we unto it.

Four. How dare we even consider that our righteousness may have played a part in our salvation.

Five. How dare we expect there to be no difficulties in our understanding of this amazing event! A critic who had read our statement that Jesus knew He was going to die and had come for that very purpose cited Jesus cry in agony, “My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” as contrary evidence. Just one more example of us misusing the Bible, he said. (He was far cruder than this.)

We are a funny lot. The sinless Son of God comes from Heaven to a wayward earth to reveal God to us, to show us the way, and to become the ultimate offering for our sin, and we expect it all to be tied up nicely with a pretty bow, for there to be nothing hard to understand, no parts that amaze us or challenge our puny minds.

If anyone has ever grasped the vast complexities of the death of the Son of God with all its meanings and ramifications, I’ve not heard of them.

Six: How dare we not bow in His presence and say, “My Lord and my God,” as Thomas did (John 20:28). Amen. Thank You, Father, for such love, for such a Savior, and for such Promise.

Message from the Council Chair – Jane DiStefano

The Church Administrative Council meets every other month on the second Monday at 7:00 PM. The next meeting will be April 10th at 7:00 PM. Anyone interested in the business of the church is invited to attend. It is always an open meeting, although voting is limited to committee members.

Just a note, if you are an officer of the church, you are a member of the council. Please join us at this meeting. If you are not sure if you are on the council, please see the list in the Fellowship Hall. Remember that this is everyone's church and what is important to you, is important to us.

United Methodist Women

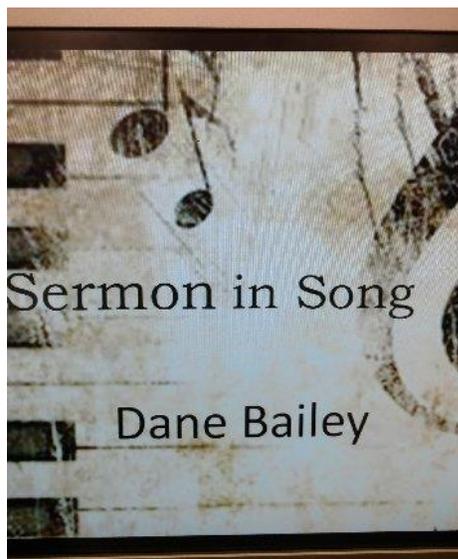
The April meeting of the United Methodist Women has been cancelled. We will meet again on May 9th at 1:00 PM. On the 13th of April the UMW, along with the ladies of the church, will be preparing and serving lunch to those who attend the Holy Week service at Olive branch. The luncheon will be a baked potato bar with toppings as well as salads and desserts. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for anyone who would like to contribute.



Dane Bailey Rocks the Church in the Lord's Music and Then Some!

Saturday, April 1st, Dane Bailey, The Singing Auctioneer provided a concert of wonderful music and anecdotes. He told us about his life in music covering from the 60's rock and roll to gospel of today and everything in between. Dane came to visit us all the way from Indiana. He said he and his wife were usually on the road 7 out of 12 months. He did note that Gasburg wasn't quite a metropolis and he and Rev Randy managed to get lost on the back roads. It was an enjoyable evening spent with 40 friends of the church.

word to us in song. His abilities were well were in attendance. We were blessed to have 45 friends join us for this special worship service inviting Dane and his wife and making this



On Sunday we once again got to enjoy Dane as he brought God's appreciated by all who of our neighbors and We thank Rev Randy for weekend so enjoyable.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Celebrating birthdays this month:

2 – Nancy Williams, 7 – Randy Williams, 8 – Makayla Clary, 13 – Sarah Wright,
17 – Arlene Tatum, 18 – Mabel King, 18 – Anne Baldwin, 24 – Linda Wright,
24 – Catherine Moore

United Methodist Men



On the 17th & 18th of March, the United Methodist Men came together, with the help of our wonderful Ladies, to prepare a delicious Brunswick Stew. They prepared a wonderful pot. If you are interested in purchasing a quart or more see any of the Men. They will be glad to get you a quart or more as we still have some left. (NOT MUCH) Cost is \$7.00 per quart.

On the 15th of April at 9:00 am. – The first of our bi-annual cleanup of Ankum Rd. will take place. This is a church project supported by the men. We will clean up two miles of Ankum Rd starting at the intersection of Gasburg Rd and heading north. Last October nine members of the church picked up 16 bags of trash along this route. The Men, along with VDOT, will provide all necessary gear for this project. There will be a signup sheet in the Narthex. If you would like to help us please sign up.

On the 19th of April the Men will, as we have in the past, be serving breakfast immediately after Easter Sunrise Services. Please join us for a time of fellowship and celebrating the risen Christ.

Outreach

Please don't forget our Church pantry! Our brothers and sisters in the greater community are suffering and need help. We are blessed that Food Lion is willing to provide us with meats, vegetables, fruits, and baked goods but, it is up to us to fill out the dietary needs of the families we serve. We currently service 12 families with food donations. Help keep our pantry stocked with your donations. I know you will open your hearts. Also, one of our biggest needs is meat. So if you are able, pick up an extra package of meat to help out one of our families. A big “thank you!”

Monthly Recipe

If you enjoy risotto then you will like this. It's quick and easy.

If you have a recipe you would like to share please send it to me or give me a copy .

Cheesy Risotto

Ingredients

1 cup long grain rice
19 oz. tomatoes with juice, undrained, chopped
1 cup water
1 tsp. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. parsley flakes
2 cups sharp Cheddar cheese, grated

Methods/Steps

Combine 6 first ingredients in a casserole. Bring to boil stirring often. Cover. Let simmer for about 20 minutes, until rice is tender. Add cheese and stir until melted.

Makes

6 servings

Easter Services 2017

Holy Week Services w/ lunch to follow

Monday, April 10 - Pleasant Hill Christian Church
Preacher - Rev Randy Williams

Tuesday, April 11- James Square Baptist Church
Preacher – Brian Mallary

Wednesday, April 12 – Matthew’s Chapel UMC
Preacher Donnie Edmunds

Thursday, April 13 Olive branch UMC
Preacher – Mark Wethington
Baked potato with toppings, salads and desserts

Friday, April 14 – Antioch Christian Church
Preacher – Minister Greg Hand

A Love Offering will be taken that will support John 3:16

Holy Week Evening Services

Thursday, April 13 – James Square Baptist Church
Preacher - Donnie Edmonds
Dinner at 6:30 Service at 7:30

Friday, April 14 – Antioch Christian Church
Community Worship Service – 7:00

Upcoming Events:

Sun April 9th - Second Sunday Luncheon - After Services

Mon. April 10th – Council Meeting 7:00 PM

Thu. April 13th - Maundy Thursday Services and Luncheon 12:00PM

Sat. April 15th – UMM Breakfast 8:00 am

Sat. April 15th – Ankum Road Clean up 9:00 AM

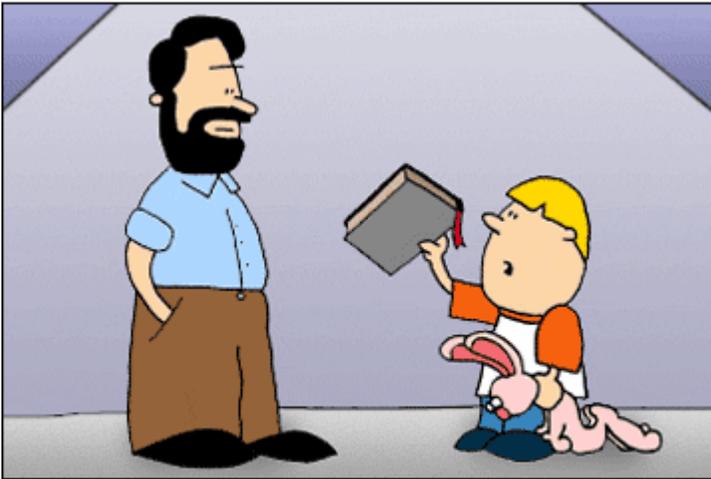
Sun April 16th – Easter Sunrise Svc and Breakfast 7:00AM

This is your newsletter. It is meant to be a way to communicate what your church is doing and what all the organizations are doing both in the congregation and the community. I am sending this electronically via email and copies will be made available for those who need a printed copy.

There are many organizations within our church and I hope they would like to have their achievements, plans, and meetings made known to the entire church. It is my hope that they will ask one of their members to drop a short note as to what they doing each month. The line of communication in the church needs to be open and full of what we are doing at Olive Branch to make disciples in our area. If you would like to send us something, please bring it to church or send me an email (revedumc@yahoo.com) and we will see that it gets published. We need all information by the 24th of each month for the following month. Please, let's keep our church informed on what we are doing. See you at church and all our activities!

God bless. Happy Easter to all! Ed DiStefano

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04-13-2006

**DAD, I NEED YOUR HELP TO FIND OUT
WHERE IT TALKS ABOUT THE EASTER BUNNY
IN THE BIBLE**