

The Sweet Spirit

Olive Branch United Methodist Church *February 2017*



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 the month of February, especially Valentine's Day. Stores are full of red hearts, chocolate, valentine cards, chocolate, fancy valentine decorations, chocolate, and oh, did I say chocolate? I wish every month of the year could be like February, with many exchanges of greetings of love.

Did you know God sent us a valentine wish through Paul?

Ephesians 3:17-18 (NIV): so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,

Romans 8:38-39 (NIV): For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God also sent us a valentine through David.

Psalms 136 (NIV): Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. Give thanks the Lord of lords. His love endures forever.

God loves us in a way we can't imagine or understand. He loves us no matter where we've been, where we are, and where we will go. He doesn't look to the past, and neither should we. It is my prayer that we share the love of God and pass the Peace of Christ with everyone we meet. May we be a valentine of love and peace and watch the world change around us!

His Love Endures Forever!

In Christian Love and In His Service,



Pastor Randy

Just a Thought - Rev Joe McKeever

Scripture spares no effort to convince God's children of who they are in Him
Consider this from one book of the New Testament, Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians...

- we are a fragrance of Christ among the saved and unsaved (2 Corinthians 2:15)
- we are a letter of Christ written by the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:3)
- we are servants of a new covenant (2 Corinthians 3:6)
- we are earthen vessels containing the treasure of God (2 Corinthians 4:7)
- we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were beseeching people through us (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- we are the temple of God, His dwelling place on earth (2 Corinthians 6:16)

And then, consider what I Peter 2:9-10 declares us to be in Christ...

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; *for you once were not a people*, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

Once you were not a people, said the Apostle Peter. If that says anything, it surely means we had not found our true identity in Christ yet. But now we are the people of God. We have found our true identity in our Lord Jesus Christ. And how wonderful is that!

One caution should be added to all this, however...

These assurances of Scripture pertain to all the disciples of Christ, the entire body, and not as much to us as individuals. Why would we make this point?

Some who call themselves born-again followers of Jesus take such Scriptures as applying to them and their relation to Him alone, but without including the rest of the family of God. "Now it's just Jesus and me" went a gospel song of my youth.

Later, some country songwriter went a step beyond and perverted it into "Jesus and me got our own thing going."

A woman told me once, "It was revealed to me that I am the church." As a result, she never joined with the body of believers in worship or service, but felt free to stand outside to criticize and slander faithful workers in the kingdom. A freedom which she was enjoying to the maximum, I might add.

No one person is the church. We are all members of His Body. We are somebody in Christ, yes! But we are part of the family of God. We are not lone rangers, one-man acts, hermits for Jesus. I am part of you and you are part of me.

We belong to Christ. We belong to one another. And that is the greatest identity of all, available to all who are born into the family of God. We are never alone again.

As a postscript, I love the statement from a lady identified in 2 Kings 4 as "the Shunnamite woman." After she had ministered to the Prophet Elisha on numerous occasions, he decided to reward her in some way.

Calling her to him, the prophet said, "What can I do for you? Maybe speak to the king on your behalf, something like that?"

The woman answered, in wonderful understatement, “I dwell among my own people.”

No insecurity there, no wondering who she was or what she was to do. She was secure in the knowledge her family would be there for her, that she was somebody in them.

How we wish God’s children felt that way about their congregations, those families of the Lord sent to represent Him on earth as they minister and love, comfort and teach.

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 Feb 13th 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, there have been some changes to the council since last year and new members are reminded that they should be 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 Men

The UMM is inviting the Church to join us for lunch on the 19th of February at the Kennon House after services. Your meals will be on the Men as they are looking for a time of fellowship with the entire Church. A sign up list is posted in the fellowship hall so “Come! Enjoy yourself!” We are planning a stew in March and in April we will, once again, clean up Ankum Road. Watch for more details on these events.

United Methodist Women

The UMW will meet on the 8th at 1:0 pm. Come, join us as we gather to do God’s work in our community. On February 12th we will be sponsoring a fund raiser called “**Souper Bowl Sunday**”. Join us for several different soups and sandwiches. A donation to our organization would be appreciated as it will help us achieve our goals of helping those who are in need.

Recommended Bible Reading from our Bishop

These are daily readings for February =- give it a try!

The readings for February	
February 1	Leviticus 1-4
February 2	Leviticus 5-7
February 3	Leviticus 8-10
February 4	Leviticus 11-13
February 5	Leviticus 14-15
February 6	Leviticus 16-18
February 7	Leviticus 19-21
February 8	Leviticus 22-23
February 9	Leviticus 24-25
February 10	Leviticus 26-27
February 11	Numbers 1-2
February 12	Numbers 3-4
February 13	Numbers 5-6
February 14	Numbers 7
February 15	Numbers 8-10
February 16	Numbers 11-13
February 17	Numbers 14-15
February 18	Numbers 16-17
February 19	Numbers 18-20
February 20	Numbers 21-22
February 21	Numbers 23-25
February 22	Numbers 26-27
February 23	Numbers 28-30
February 24	Numbers 31-32
February 25	Numbers 33-34
February 26	Numbers 35-36
February 27	Deuteronomy 1-2
February 28	Deuteronomy 3-4

United Methodist Women's Library

New Arrival- **“Slowing Time: Seeing the Sacred Outside Your Kitchen Door”** by Barbara Mahany. Beginning in winter and tracing the seasons through the year, Mahany celebrates sacredness that is gathered through the art of paying attention savoring moments and cultivating stillness, By making room for God and finding Godly specks in the mundane, she pinpoints divinity in the nooks and crannies of our everyday world. Check it out.

Outreach

We received 42 Food Lion Feeds boxes from Lakeside Lutheran (coordinating church for food bank) which were distributed to our "friends of Olive Branch" food pantry recipients. The Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone who donated, helped and delivered the gifts for the Angel Tree. There were 30 gifts for Adults, 20 gifts for children and 7 gift cards donated. These were joyfully received by 25 adults and 8 children.

We are blessed with a small but mighty congregation.

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!”

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Celebrating birthdays this month:

1 – Lisa Baird Horoszewski, 2– Linda Dennis, 3– Annette Mincey



LOOK PASTOR, NOW I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT
SOME OF THE LEADERS AND HEROES FROM
MY RELIGION

Upcoming Events:

Wed. February 8th – United Methodist Women 1:00 PM

Sun February 12th – UMW Souper Bowl - After Services

Sun February 19th - United Methodist Men Church Luncheon – After Services @
The Kennon House

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, if possible, 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 New Year to all! Ed DiStefano