

The Sweet Spirit

Olive Branch United Methodist Church

July 2016



From The Pastor's Pen,

Greetings and peace in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It just doesn't seem possible that we have completed our first year in ministry with the South Brunswick Charge. A little over a year ago, Nancy and I were filled with anxiety, anxiousness, fear and trepidations, about our move to Gasburg.

What would it be like? What was the parsonage like? Would we be accepted? Would we fit in with the congregations' expectations and needs? Will God's ministry through me match what was expected and needed at Rock and Olive Branch. Would they like and accept my style of ministry, of music and preaching? It didn't take long, though, for those burdens to be lifted as we started a year of blessings, love and support from the fine Christian people of the SB Charge.

Of course, we trusted God (and our Bishop and DS) to put us in a wonderful place, but little did we know how much we would be blessed, loved and supported. Each one of you have not only supported your churches and their ministries, but have welcomed us with open arms and love we never imagined and made this past year one of many blessings for Nancy and I.

Little did we know, but now we know how committed you are to God, your church, your fellow sisters and brothers in Christ in your congregations, and serving your churches with your attendance, your prayers, your gifts, your service and your witness.

You are to be commended for stepping up as laity and leading your congregations in service and worship to God. It is you, the laity that makes the church, not the pastor! I am so overwhelmed with the leadership and laity of our churches.

Having said that, we are starting another year and must heed the call of God upon our churches and our lives to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Our mission has not changed, nor has God's vision for our churches changed. Let's continue to serve, lead, attend, support, and honor God and share God's love with all that we meet.

And, oh yea, I haven't mentioned prayer.....the source of all power, mercy and grace. Be diligent in praying for our denomination, The Virginia Conference, Farmville District and each of our churches, and your pastoral family as we make this coming year a year of celebrating a greater ministry together.

Blessing and Peace,
Randy

Man and a Fork

There was a young man who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So as he was getting his things 'in order,' he contacted his Pastor and had him come to his house to discuss certain aspects of his final wishes.

He told him which songs he wanted sung at the service, what scriptures he would like read, and what outfit he wanted to be buried in. Everything was in order and the Pastor was preparing to leave when the young man suddenly remembered something very important to him. "There's one more thing," he said excitedly..

'What's that?' came the Pastors reply.

'This is very important,' the young man continued. 'I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand.'

The Pastor stood looking at the young man, not knowing quite what to say.

'That surprises you, doesn't it?' the young man asked.

'Well, to be honest, I'm puzzled by the request,' said the Pastor

The young man explained. 'My grandmother once told me this story, and from that time on I have always tried to pass along its message to those I love and those who are in need of encouragement. In all my years of attending socials and dinners, I always remember that when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, 'Keep your fork.'

It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. Something wonderful, and with substance!' So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder 'What's with the fork?'

Then I want you to tell them: 'Keep your fork ... the best is yet to come.'

The Pastor's eyes welled up with tears of joy as he hugged the young man good-bye. He knew this would be one of the last times he would see him before his death. But he also knew that the young man had a better grasp of heaven than he did. He had a better grasp of what heaven would be like than many people twice his age, with twice as much experience and knowledge.

He KNEW that something better was coming.

At the funeral people were walking by the young man's casket and they saw the suit he was wearing and the fork placed in his right hand. Over and over, the Pastor heard the question, 'What's with the fork?' And over and over he just smiled.

During his message, the Pastor told the people of the conversation he had with the young man shortly before he died. He also told them about the fork and about what it symbolized to him.

He told the people how he could not stop thinking about the fork and told them that they probably would not be able to stop thinking about it either. He was right.

So the next time you reach down for your fork let it remind you, ever so gently, that the best is yet to come.

Friends are a very rare jewel, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. Cherish the time you have, and the memories you share. Being friends with someone is not an opportunity, but a sweet responsibility.

Tell this to everyone you consider a FRIEND... and I'll bet this will be a story they do remember, every time they pick up a fork!

And just remember ... keep your fork!

The Best is yet to come!

Our Library

At all ages we can benefit from the church library. Learning should never stop. We can learn about something we never were exposed to or learn more about a subject we are interested in. This month, in our library:

Joshua in a Troubled World by Joseph Girzone.

The subtitle of the book was a story for our time. It was published in 2005, but it could have been taken from today's new casts. The novel brings a message of love and compassion from the streets of Washington, DC to the Middle East.

The fictional depiction of Jesus returns to the present day world with a message to work for peace in the world. Joshua manages to speak a message that opens the hearts of both sides of the issues. The story is outside the political arena and to the heart of people. The people who love their God and their families. It is a course of action to get people to realize that having their young men blow themselves up is not helping the cause and is truly a waste of wonderful young lives.

It was very interesting and I came away thinking this could really happen if people just got together and listen to the message from God. I would recommend this book. It explores explosive issues of our day and offers a realistic compassionate assessment of the things that divide us and the beliefs that can serve as a foundation for a new, more peaceful world.

submitted by Nancy Maguire

United Methodist Women

All women of the church are invited to take part in the meeting and missional activities of the UMW. The United Methodist Women will have their Annual Candle Lighting for those you would like to remember. Please fill out the forms in the church bulletin with those you wish to remember or honor. A donation to the UMW would be greatly appreciated at this time to support their missionary work. If you would like to join in their work the next meeting will be on July 13th at 2:00 pm.

Message from the Council Chair

Jane DiStefano

The Church Administrative Council meets every other month on the second Monday at 7:00 PM. Our next meeting will be on August 8th. 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.

The council is looking at some electrical problems in the church and will have a report on them. Also, we are looking at the costs of replacing the roof as we are experiencing shingles showing their age. Along with these situations is the replacement or repair of our outside tarp.

If you have any items that need to be discussed at council, please feel free to come to a meeting or contact me or Pastor Randy. Remember that this is everyone's church and what is important to you, is important to us.

Worship Committee

Nancy Williams, Chairperson

Upcoming worship activities and ministries:

The “Prayer Square” ministry is well underway and being graciously received by the recipients of the squares. A big thank you to everyone who has made this ministry possible.

On Father’s Day, June 19th, was a special time of recognition during the worship service for the men in our lives.

Outreach

Backpack program: Due to lack of coordination in this organization the Charge has decided to no longer support this endeavor. This was done with great thought and prayer and it was a difficult decision. It was felt that if the program could find a capable organizational leader it would be a “Great” program. Thank you all for your support!

Lisa’s Great Give Away will take place on Saturday, August 13th. If you have something taking up space in your, basement, garage or closets and are looking for a place to donate them (We are collecting clothing and small household items), bring them to church before August 8th. Each of the past years have been a great success as we help those in our community who need these items. There is no charge to the public for the items – We just give them away!

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 10 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!” to those who take the time to help with the deliveries and each of you who donate to the Food Bank. Thanks again for all you do.

United Methodist Men

The men are planning on a weekly golf event. As we get more information we will post it and invite all those who would like to join us to do so. You don’t have to be good to join this group! We are a bunch of duffers!

We have applied to VADOT to take responsibility to clean up Ankum Road from Route 46 to Gasburg. Once we get the okay we will be scheduling a Saturday to take on this effort. We invite the church to join us as we try to help our community keep looking good. The State will be supplying all the equipment and apparel we need plus a sign advertising to the area the people who are doing this project.

A note to all the men of the church: the UMM meets on the third Saturday of each month. This month we will meet on the 16th. We invite all men of the church to join us for a time of fellowship, breakfast, and devotion. We welcome our sister church, Rock, as we would gladly have them join us for breakfast. Our next meeting will be July 16th. At 8:00 AM. Breakfast will be provided.

Anniversaries

Edward & Nancy Maguire – 9 Judy and Roger Kibler -11 Ray and Kathy Dyer - 21

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Celebrating birthdays this month:

Larry Mincey -1 Carol Baird -5 Brett Clary - 8 Vickie Evans – 12
Stella Wright – 16 Johnna Fross – 20

Choir Makes a Joyful Noise

And our choir does just that. We practice on Wednesday's at 7:00 PM. We are 14 strong at this time. If you feel that you would like to make a joyful noise, please come join us. It should be an exciting time for us and the church! Let us all come together to praise the Lord in song at our worship services.

July4th?

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AS CHRISTIANS WE ARE INDEPENDENT OF
EVIL AND AN ETERNITY OF PAIN AND
SUFFERING ... WHEN DO WE GET
FIREWORKS?

Upcoming Events:

Sun July 11th Second Sunday Luncheon - After Services

Wed July 13th – 2pm – UMW Meeting

Sat July 16th – 8:00 am – UMM Breakfast and Meeting

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. Ed DiStefano