

# *The Sweet Spirit*

## *Olive Branch United Methodist Church*

*March, 2016*



## **Our Job Is to Love People, Not Change Them**

By Jarrid Wilson

*Regardless of how God uses me, I can't change people. That is God's job, not mine.*

**I love change. I love helping people. And I love seeing people changed by the love of God. But regardless of how much God decides to use me, I alone cannot change people. This is God's job, not mine.**

**I remember when I first became a believer in Jesus and somehow thought that it was my duty to change people for the sake of advancing The Gospel—which is funny because I myself wasn't even changed by a man or women, but instead was loved and directed toward the only true source that could bring me change: God**

**I would rejoice when people would find hope in Christ, but would feel like a failure when someone would turn away from wanting to know Jesus as Lord. I took it personally. It was a little discouraging, but that's because my mindset was completely off. I was focusing way too much on what "I" was doing for God, and not enough on the bigger picture: God's omnipotent power and preeminent role in the business of life change.**

**I believe many of today's Christians put too much weight on themselves to bring people to Jesus. It's our job to love people, not change them. And we must understand the reality that only the Holy Spirit has the power and authority to do such a thing. Our calling is to simply share The Gospel in love and truth, showcasing the character of Jesus through our everyday lives. This alone is the calling of a Christian. This alone is a weighty yet fulfilling purpose for each and every person who chooses to pick up their cross daily.**

**If we were to scour the Bible, we'd see there is not a single passage that states we are called to change people. Why? Because it's not our job, and it was never intended to be. We must take a step back and realize that God's job is to be God, and our job is to lead people toward the door that is hope. Once we've done this, we must let go and allow Him who created the world to take care of the rest.**

***“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.” —John 13:34***

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## **Pastor's Message**

**From The Pastor's Pen,**

**Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. What a privilege it has been to serve the South Brunswick Charge for the past 8 months. Time sure flies when you're having fun. Nancy and I have truly been blessed by God and the fine people of the charge.**

**With the Lenten season upon us, it is my prayer that you reflect on the walk that Jesus took for each one of us. A walk that brought Jesus laud and honor and ended in agony, pain and death. But that death on the cross was a fulfillment of part of God's plan and a beginning of eternal life.**

**Nancy and I had the privilege of visiting the Upper Room, where Jesus served the first Holy Meal, standing in the garden of Gethsemane where He agonized over what was facing Him and walking along the path that Jesus walked, the Via Dolorosa, to the cross on Calvary. Nothing in our spiritual walk can compare to being there and reflecting on what Jesus did for each one of us.**

**As we approach Holy Week, I encourage you to daily reflect on the last days of Jesus' ministry and life; offer up prayers and praises to God, and examining our own lives to see where we can be better disciples for Jesus Christ.**

**Thank you all for making our transition to the South Brunswick Charge a wonderful experience. Thank you for accepting us and loving us in a way we never anticipated. Thank you for providing a wonderful parsonage and for the updates and fixes that have been needed. Thank you for your love and support of Nancy and I and our ministry among you.**

**Also, thank you for your love of God, love and support of Olive Branch UMC, your participation and sharing of the gifts God has given you and for your love and support of Nancy and I.**

**Indeed, it's an honor and privilege to serve and be in ministry among you!**

**In Christian Love, Pastor Randy**

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## Second Sunday Lunch

Second Sunday Lunch this month will be on the 13th. All are invited to join together after services for a time of fellowship and good food. We ask that you bring a plate or a desert so all may be served.

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## Lent

Lent is a solemn religious observance in the liturgical calendar of many Christian denominations that begins on Ash Wednesday and covers a period of approximately six weeks before Easter Day. This year it started on Feb 10<sup>th</sup> and ends on Mar 26<sup>th</sup>

The traditional purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer through prayer, penance, repentance of sins, almsgiving, atonement and self-denial. Its institutional purpose is heightened in the annual commemoration of Holy Week, marking the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, which recalls the tradition and events of the New Testament, climaxing on Jesus' crucifixion on Good Friday, which ultimately culminates in the joyful celebration on Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

During Lent, many of the faithful commit to fasting or giving up certain types of luxuries as a form of penitence. The Stations of the Cross, a devotional commemoration of Christ's carrying the Cross and of his execution, are often observed. Many Roman Catholic and some Protestant churches remove flowers from their altars, while crucifixes, religious statues, and other elaborate religious symbols are often veiled in violet fabrics in solemn observance of the event. Lent is traditionally described as lasting for forty days, in commemoration of the forty days which, according to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus spent fasting in the desert before the beginning of his public ministry, where he endured temptation by the Devil. Historically, the season of Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday. This duration has been maintained by most Western Christian denominations, including the Anglican Church, Lutheran Church, Methodist Church, and Western Rite Orthodox Church. As we received ashes on Ash Wednesday we are told be aware of the words that are spoken to you: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." This is a time of repentance and soul searching. Be blessed!

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## Message from the Council Chair – Jane DiStefano

Another month has come and gone and I find myself looking forward to the Lenten Season. A time to look at oneself, seek direction and grow. And our church needs to follow this same path...look at where we are, how we are doing and what can we do to improve. Remember - don't let the past overwhelm the present.

**As we begin to think about our church's direction, let's seek God's direction. Let's ask God to step into our church life, to guide us in the direction he has planned for us. We cannot do this alone. And if each and every one of us prays for God's guidance and blessings, great things can and will happen.**

**I have seen such great improvement in the spirit of the church in the last few months and it makes me want to be there more and more. It is such a privilege to have such a wonderful Church family; To see your love and concern for each person in our family, especially the way you have each come together to support our new pastor and his wife. I hope we can continue to grow in this love and spirit.**

**Please remember that our church will only be as good as those willing to work at making it the best it can be. Please come to council meetings and help us plan for the future. I look forward to seeing everyone on April 11th. Please feel free to contact me if you have any suggestions or questions. – Jane**

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## **Outreach**

**There was one of our Angel Tree families that requested bikes for Christmas, they have 3 children. We did not get new bikes for them at Christmas but we have given the family 3 very nice used bikes and a scooter, they were very happy and very appreciative.**

### **March Activities:**

**March 11, Friday. 2nd Friday of the Month food pantry delivery: Robert & Catherine Moore and Ed & Jane DiStefano will be delivering. We can always use help and training is provided.**

**Easter Dinner for our food pantry families will be delivered on Tuesday March 22, we are requesting donations of Easter Candy, 12 bags of 5 lb. potatoes, canned green beans and canned pineapple slices. Also, as something different this year if we could have donation of 12 dozens of dyed hard boiled eggs to distribute. A sign up sheet will be posted.**

**Holy Week Luncheon Services: Olive Branch will be hosting Maundy (Holy) Thursday, March 24. A Potato Bar with Salad will be served. A sign up sheet for salads and potato toppings will be posted.**

**As a Lenten commitment: we are asking for donations of canned meat and PB&J for our food pantry.**

**Backpack program: We are participating with other area churches to provide meals for the weekend for school children. We will help fund the food and we have been asked to help with the packaging and distribution of the food. We would like to help at another**

**church first to see what is involved. Volunteers for this program may talk with Pastor.**

**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. 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.**

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## **Prayer Bear Ministry**

**It entails donating a stuffed bear to our church so that we all hug and send on its way to someone who is in need of prayer. Several have been sent to members of our church who have had serious surgery or illnesses recently and we have been told the bears were with them during their stay in the hospital and when they came home. It is a small but powerful ministry. If you get a chance pick up a bear and let us hug him/her and send it on its way to help someone in need. Many have gone to those in need of a hug. They truly are a blessing!**

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## **United Methodist Men**

**The United Methodist Men are continuing their mission work. They have three heaters available to loan to those in the community who have little or no heat. They are, now, registered with Brunswick County Social Services as a source of heat in the Gasburg area. If you know of a family or a person in need of heat this winter please call Ed DiStefano, 252-537-5705 or Ray Dyer, 252-308-0972 for assistance.**

**A Stew will be held on the 15<sup>th</sup> & 16th of April. A call to all the men of the church to join us in preparing the stew and all the members of the church to help us sell it.**

**A note to all the men of the church the UMM meets on the third Saturday of each month.. Our next meeting will be the 19th of March at 8:00AM. We invite all men of the church to join us for a time of fellowship, breakfast, devotion. We welcome our sister church, Rock, as we gladly have them join us for breakfast.**

## **Easter Services**

### **Holy Week Noontime Luncheon Services**

**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> Pleasant Hill Christian - Rev. Mark Wethington Preaching**

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> James Square Baptist – Rev Shaun Smith Preaching**

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> Matthew’s Chapel UMC - Rev Tom Childrey Preaching**

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> Olive Branch UMC - Minister Greg Hand Preaching**

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> Antioch Christian – Rev Randy Williams Preaching**

**Lunch will be served following services**

### **Holy Week Evening Services**

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> James Square Baptist - Rev Mark Wethington Preaching**

**Dinner 6:30 pm Service 7:30pm**

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> Antioch Christian - Community Worship Service 7:00pm**

### **Sunrise Service**

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> Olive Branch UMC Sunrise Service 7:00am Pea Hill Creek Bridge, Gasburg Rd. Breakfast follows conclusion at Olive Branch UMC Fellowship Hall**

**Join all our community churches as we celebrate the risen Christ during this Holy Week.**

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## **United Methodist Women**

**The UMW held their annual Quiet Day Apart, which is a time for reflection and prayer on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February. Seven ladies of the church attended. They were looking forward to their “Souper Bowl” fundraiser on the 14th. However, due to the extremely cold weather predicted and out of concern for our church family, they decided to postpone that event. They hope to have it take place in the near future. Their next meeting will take place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March in the Fellowship Hall. All women of the church are invited to take part in the meeting and missional activities of the UMW.**

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**\*\*\*\*\* VALENTINES LUNCHEON\*\*\*\*\***

The United Methodist Men's "Valentines Luncheon was held on Sunday, February 21st at the Kennon House after services. All members of our Church were invited to attend as everybody is someone's Valentine. Just ask Jesus about love! Transportation was provided to anyone needing a ride. There were 29 people who attended and had a great time of fellowship and food. All had a great time. We hope that next year more will join us on this occasion to take the opportunity to show our grateful thanks to all who make our church successful.

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### **Save Your Empty Ink Cartridges**

A continuing mission project headed by Matte Bersch is to gather empty ink cartridges and send them away. The company that they are sent to then sends the church a check. Sooo, please save them and put them in the box in the fellowship hall. All funds go to continuing our outreach. Thank you Mattie!

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### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

**Celebrating birthdays this month:**

**Gail Rice 11, Leroy Drummond 14, Barbara Floyd 27, Ed DiStefano 28,  
Alex Roller 30**

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### **March Anniversary's**

**Monty and Vickie Evans 24, B. J. and Pat Griggs 25**

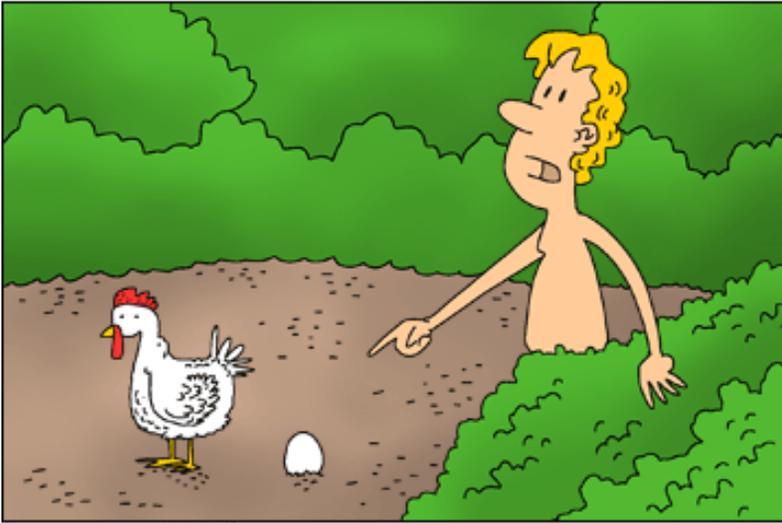
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### **Choir Makes a Joyful Noise**

And our choir does just that. We practice on Wednesday's at 7:00 PM. We are 9 strong at this time and with the help of Shirley Everest we are learning to read music. Try that at our age!!! If you feel that you would like to make a joyful noise, please come join us. We are planning for the Lenten and Easter Season. 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.

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**REMINDER:** *Set your clocks ahead 1 hour on March 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 AM*



(See Genesis 1:1-2:3)

07-06-2015

I MISSED IT ... WHICH ONE CAME FIRST?

### Upcoming Events:

March 9<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM -UMW Meeting  
6:00 PM - Worship Committee Meeting

March 13<sup>th</sup> - Second Sunday Luncheon – potluck

March 19<sup>th</sup> 9:00 AM - United Methodist Men Breakfast

This is our 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](mailto:revedumc@yahoo.com)) and we will see that it gets published. We need all information by the 24<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please, let's keep our church informed on what we are doing. See you at church and God bless.

Ed DiStefano