

The Sweet Spirit

Olive Branch United Methodist Church *March 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.

Words cannot express how blessed Nancy and I have been during this recent time of Mom's death. We received so many cards, calls, messages and the very generous love offering from our family at Olive Branch UMC and are truly touched, blessed and thankful for all of your acts of kindness and especially your prayers. Of course, we have been blessed since coming on the South Brunswick Charge, but your outpouring of love and support have made this time much easier for us to go through.

You have lived out the command by Jesus to love one another:

John 13:34 *A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*

As you go through this time of Lent, reflecting on your life and remembering what Jesus Christ did for us, may you be blessed with the presence of The Holy Spirit as you journey toward the celebration on Easter Sunday!

***The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace***
In Christian Love and In His Service,



Pastor Randy

Just a Thought - Rev Joe McKeever

I don't have to understand it all in order to believe

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord....” (Romans 11:33-34)

I do not understand all the prophecies of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation.

Nor do you. Nor is it necessary that we do.

That's my opinion. You're welcome to yours. But we will go on loving each other in Christ.

The list of other things we do not understand (or agree on!) is extensive.

What we must do is beware of that yearning inside us which cannot leave these matters alone, which cries out for solutions and explanations.

Something inside us does not want to walk by faith, in spite of Scripture's emphasis on our doing just that (Habakkuk 2:4; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Luke 18:8; Hebrews 11:6).

To live by faith means, among other things, we leave the whys and wherefores with God, along with the outcomes and the incomes!

What about the Jews?

The wonderful little doxology found at the end of Romans 11 comes on the heels of Paul's word about the Jews. The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable, he says, meaning they are in effect forever. But the apostle does not begin to explain how God is going to work out the disobedience of the Jews and bring them into the fullness of His plans. After making this claim, he bursts into praise for the wisdom and knowledge of God.

I take that as Paul saying, “I have no clue how or when this is going to work out. Only that it will.”

And he leaves the matter with the Lord.

Oh, that we could do that!

People then and now are always trying to help God out, to speak where God is silent, to explain what God left as mysterious.

The disciples afflicted with OCD cannot leave dangling ends anywhere; they must be dealt with, all questions settled, all loose ends tied up.

Jesus was not obsessive-compulsive, and we who are should not bring our malady into our discipleship. Just saying.

Consider the Mount of Transfiguration. Overcome by the majesty of what he was seeing, the Apostle Peter burst out, “Lord! Let's make three tabernacles up here. One for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah!” (Mark 9:5).

Good idea, huh? Well, apparently not. Mark says Peter said that because he did not know what to say! (Mark 9:6.) Just like us, isn't it?

God did not allow them to build such tabernacles. However, a few years ago, when some of us were atop Mount Tabor, said by some to be the Mount in question, we learned that the Franciscans had indeed built chapels, three in number. What Jesus would not allow the disciples to do, the monks did. Go Figure!

Helping God out. Speaking where He is silent. Going where He did not send. Explaining what He left as mystery.

No wonder David prayed to be kept from presumptuous sins (Psalm 19:13).

Running ahead of God.

“Where were you, Job,” asked the Heavenly Father, “when I laid the foundations of the world? If you’re so smart, tell me how the planets are suspended in space with nothing to hold them up? If you’re so smart, have you ever commanded the morning to appear? And where does light dwell? Do you know how the constellations of stars work?”

The Lord’s questions to His little know-it-all went on for most of four chapters of Job (38-41), all to achieve one tiny little result in God’s man: to make him shut up.

There is a time to shut up. To be quiet before God, to serve Him with awe and humility and love. When the Lord finally came to an end, Job said, “I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know” (Job 42:3).

He said, “Lord, I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear. But now, my eye sees Thee.

Therefore, I repent in sackcloth and ashes.” (42:5-6).

The Lord wanted Job—as He wants you and me—to be willing to serve Him faithfully and believe in Him completely without knowing the whys and wherefores. In his lifetime, Job never understood why God let him suffer as he did. He found out in Heaven. Just as we will.

“Known only to Him are the great hidden secrets. I’ll fear not the darkness when my plane shall dim. I know not what the future holds, but I know who holds the future. It’s a secret known only to Him.” We’ve come this far by faith. And it would appear the rest of the journey will be made in the same manner.

The Singing Auctioneer

Dane Bailey, The Singing Auctioneer, will present a concert at Olive Branch UMC on Saturday, April 1, 2017 at 7:00 PM. The public is invited to attend. Many of you will remember that Dane was with us last year at this time. Dane will also be with us during Worship on Sunday, April 2nd. Please invite your friends and family for this fun event.

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, 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.

Gideons Make a Presentation

David Lipscomb spoke at our March 12th service providing information about the Gideon Society. We learned how the small Testament Bibles and Bibles placed in hotels, with police, ambulance, military groups have touched so many lives. The Bible is in 99 different languages so that the Good News can reach around the world.

Praise God that the ministry can reach out to so many. We were able to be involved in a small way as a collection was made and \$370 were contributed to this project. Thanks to all who hear and helped. Remember to keep all those who are spreading the Word in your prayers. David reminded us to tell someone about Jesus today.

United Methodist Men

The annual luncheon, supported by the UMM, was a great success. 27 of our brothers and sisters joined in a time fellowship at the Kenyon House after services on the 19th of February. This was the start of our year and everyone enjoyed being there. The Men have planned several other events for this year. They are:

March 17 & 18 - Brunswick stew is scheduled. Cost is \$7.00 per quart. It will be ready by 11:00 on March 18

March 15at 9:00 am. – The first for this year of our bi-annual cleanup of our adopted road, Ankum Rd. will take place. There will be a sign up sheet in the fellowship hall. If you would like to help us please sign up by the March 12.

April 19- As we have in the past we will be serving breakfast immediately after Easter Sunrise Services.

United Methodist Women

Six members of our UMW had the privilege to participate in the district Annual Prayer Breakfast on March 11th in South Hill. The theme was Jesus and the Bodacious Women. The Spiritual Growth Chairperson, Jane Smith conducted the meeting beautifully. I looked up "bodacious" in the dictionary - bold, daring, fearless, brave, reckless were the words used. Jane used "changed women". The program included 5 ladies portraying women that met Jesus during his ministry and how their lives were changed. The stories are timeless, the situations that exist in the Bible and even now. Jesus shows us Love, Forgiveness, and how to grow and change.

The UMW meets on the 2nd Wednesday at 1 PM at the church, all women are welcome. Come out and get to know us.

United Methodist Women's Library

The United Methodist Women support and maintain a bookcase of interesting books. We have a biography of Sally Ride. You might recall she was the first American Woman in Space. She made history. She broke through a quarter-century of white male fighter jocks when NASA chose her for the seventh shuttle mission. In this engaging and entertaining book the author Lynn Sherr tells the story of America's exploration in the outer reaches of space.

"Revealing ..The Sally Ride" that emerges here- courageous, gifted, determined, complicated--is both heroic and human. Sherr captures her as someone who didn't just want to make a name for herself. She wanted to make a difference." from the San Diego Union- Tribune You will find this book in the Leadership Development section of our bookcase. We are investigating a new location that has better light and space so you can find the books easier. Keep an eye out for our library on the move. Please take advantage of these wonder books, they are purchased to be purchased to be shared.

Bible Study of the Gospels

Each Thursday at 2:00 PM and again at 7:00 PM, Pastor Randy leads us on a study of the Gospels. It is a time of learning the history and the why and wherefores of God's own book. We explore the similarities and the differences of the Gospels. After a time of learning, we reflect on God's word in a time of discussion. Everybody is invited and it is a lot of FUN!

Outreach

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.. Food Lion, who have been more than generous, have not had meats available lately. If you get a chance and find a meat sale please pick up a package for our families currently We service 12 families with food donations. Help keep our pantry stocked with your donations. I know you will open your hearts. So if you are able, pick up an extra package of meat to help out one of our families. A big **"thank you!"**

Recommended Daily Bible Reading from our Bishop For March -- give it a try!

March 1 Deuteronomy 5-7	March 17 Joshua 22-24
March 2 Deuteronomy 8-10	March 18 Judges 1-2
March 3 Deuteronomy 11-13	March 19 Judges 3-5
March 4 Deuteronomy 14-16	March 20 Judges 6-7
March 5 Deuteronomy 17-20	March 21 Judges 8-9
March 6 Deuteronomy 21-23	March 22 Judges 10-12
March 7 Deuteronomy 24-27	March 23 Judges 13-15
March 8 Deuteronomy 28-29	March 24 Judges 16-18
March 9 Deuteronomy 30-31	March 25 Judges 19-21
March 10 Deuteronomy 32-34	March 26 Ruth 1-4
March 11 Joshua 1-4	March 27 1 Samuel 1-3
March 12 Joshua 5-8	March 28 1 Samuel 4-8
March 13 Joshua 9-11	March 29 1 Samuel 9-12
March 14 Joshua 12-15	March 30 1 Samuel 13-14
March 15 Joshua 16-18	March 31 1 Samuel 15-17
March 16 Joshua 19-21	

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Celebrating birthdays in March:

5- Jim Nolan, 11- Gail Rice, 27- Leroy Drummond , 28- Ed Distefano, 30- Alex Roller

Monthly Recipe

This month we start a new article. Many have asked for recipes of the food we share on Second Sunday Lunch. Today, Mar 12, was no different. Some asked for Pastor Randy's recipe for crock pot lasagna. He was willing to spread the good news. So, here it is! Enjoy!

If you have a recipe you would like to share please send it to me by the end of the month at (revedumc@yahoo.com). We will get them in on a first received first in the newsletter for that month.

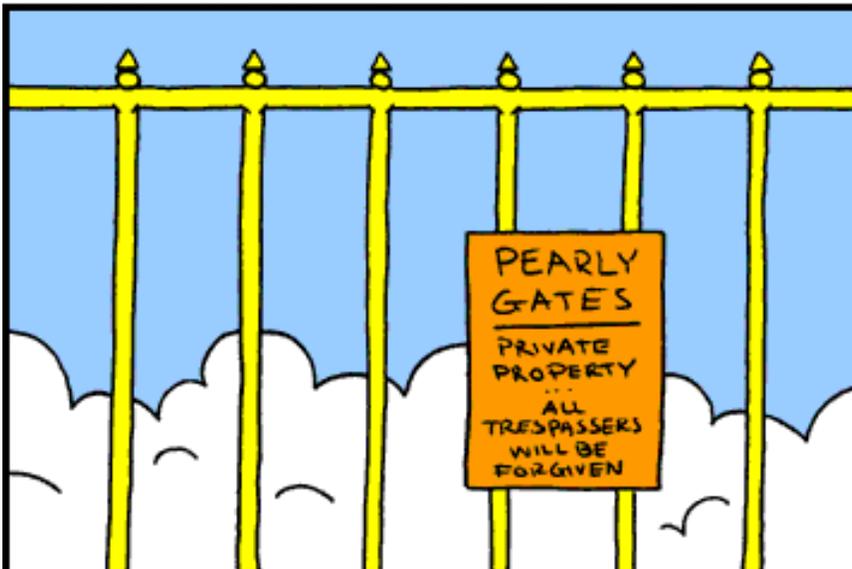
Crock Pot Lasagna Submitted by Pastor Randy

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 jar (24 oz.) Traditional Pasta Sauce
- 1 cup water
- 1 container (15 oz.) Ricotta Cheese
- 1 pkg. (7 oz.) KRAFT 2% Milk Shredded Mozzarella Cheese, divided
- 1/4 cup KRAFT Grated Parmesan Cheese, divided
- 1 egg
- 6 lasagna noodles, uncooked

Brown meat in large skillet; drain. Stir in pasta sauce and water. In a bowl mix ricotta, 1-1/2 cups mozzarella, 2 Tbsp. Parmesan, egg.

Spoon 1 cup meat sauce into slow cooker; top with layers of half each of the noodles (broken to fit) and cheese mixture. Cover with 2 cups meat sauce. Top with remaining noodles (broken to fit), cheese mixture and meat sauce. Cover with lid. Cook on LOW 4 to 6 hours or until liquid is absorbed. Sprinkle with remaining cheeses; let stand, covered, 10 min. or until melted.

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Thanks to Mikel Rice

04-02-1998

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 30^h 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. Have a Great Month! Ed DiStefano