

TOWER TIDINGS NEWSLETTER



The pioneers of our United Methodist faith tradition were genuine followers of Jesus Christ. Francis Asbury answered God's call by leaving his native England and came to America to "spread scriptural holiness across the land" and became the driving force behind the Methodist Episcopal Church. As followers of Jesus, Philip William Otterbein and Martin Boehm joined forces to organize the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. As a follower of Jesus, Jacob Albright broke from the English-speaking Methodist Episcopal Church to form the German-speaking Evangelical Association. These pioneers of the faith never intended to start new churches, but they were intentional followers of Jesus Christ.

As you think about your relationship with Jesus, are you a follower, or a fan? There is a real difference. A fan will cheer Jesus from the sidelines. A follower is moved to action to do exactly what Jesus wants accomplished. Are you a fan or a follower?

The Wesleyan Covenant prayer is a prayer for followers of Jesus. The wording is blunt:

**I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant, which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.**

Can you pray the Covenant prayer with integrity? Would you like to pray it with integrity? January is a perfect time to rededicate yourself to being a follower of Jesus Christ and not just a fan.

Grace & Peace,



Worship Themes for January 2021 at Palmyra First Church

January is a month of new beginning with a fresh start on the new year. The year begins on the eighth day of Christmas and our liturgical color will be white. It will remain through Baptism of the Lord Sunday (January 10th) and then changes to green for the season of “after Epiphany.”

Our themes for the month are as follows:

January 3rd is the first Sunday of 2021. It is a wonderful time to renew our covenant with God, and at the 10:30 AM service, we will do so using the Wesleyan Covenant service. Our scriptures will be Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 which reminds us there is a season for every matter under Heaven, and Matthew 25:31-46, which is a parable told by Jesus to explain how the final judgment will take place. Both services will include our first Holy Communion of the new year.

January 10th is Baptism of the Lord Sunday. Our readings will center on baptism and be taken from Mark 1:4-11 where Jesus is baptized, Matthew 28:16-20 where Jesus directs the disciples to baptize, and Acts 19:1-7 where Paul deals with some of the differences between the baptism John offered and the baptism Jesus told us to do. Our message will deal with these same differences.

If you have never been baptized, or you have a child who has never been baptized, this would be an ideal Sunday to have baptisms done during either of the services.

January 17th is Human Relations Sunday on the United Methodist schedule of special days. Our focus will be on the variety of people God calls to service. Our Old Testament reading will be from 1 Samuel 3:1-20 where a boy (Samuel) is called on by God and given a special task. The Gospel reading will be John 1:45-51 where the skeptic Nathaniel comes to know Jesus’ true identity.

January 24th is the day we will begin a two-part message on the Old Testament book of Jonah. We will read the first half of the story, which includes chapters 1 and 2. The message will center on God’s call on our lives and the consequences of defying God’s commands.

January 31st we will examine the second half of Jonah’s story by reading chapters 3 and 4. The message will explore God’s overwhelming willingness to forgive. We will be examining how God desires to teach us about His forgiving grace and the ways He encourages us to be forgiving people.

Vision for 2020 and Beyond

Our Vision team met in early December to discuss our plans to offer Christmas gift wrapping as a community service and as a fundraiser for Support Connections of Lebanon County (SCLC), and to evaluate our other efforts to revitalize the church.

The gift wrap service ran into two major stumbling blocks. The first was when Gov. Wolf ordered the shutdown of indoor dining. As a result, though we might be exempt, we decided we would suspend Awakenings Coffee Shop in light of the diners being shuttered. This took foot traffic away from the church on two of the three days we planned to receive gifts. The second issue was the Wednesday snowstorm that closed almost everything on Thursday. The team will reevaluate the gift wrap idea again next year and decide on our plans going forward.

Another Christmas related project was to distribute 90 Christmas Eve worship bags that included an invitation to the Christmas Eve online services, a copy of the Christmas Eve bulletin, a candle to light during Silent Night, information about the church, a bag of coffee used at Awakenings, and a letter of explanation. We will see if this causes a spike in our online attendance.

Our Awakenings Coffee Shop will reopen on Tuesday, January 5. Awakenings had been building a sense of community among the attendees and bringing new people into the sanctuary for worship. We have even found new help to run the shop among the attendees. Bill and Judy Woodring began to take responsibility for the operation just as the shutdown occurred.

We are still planning to offer a group therapy session for those who are having difficulties because of the isolation resulting from the COVID-19 related shutdowns and other life issues. The start date is uncertain as this session was originally planned as an in-person group. Our facilitator psychologist Linda Meashey is reevaluating our next steps. For more information about the plans feel free to email her at lmeashey@palmyrafirst.org.

We are still planning to offer a series of community seminars covering a variety of topics beginning in February. Topics will include things like why you need a medical advance directive and a medical power of attorney. These workshops will be practical and send you home with some of the paperwork to get you started on all the documents you need to be ready for any occasion. If you have a topic or speaker you would like to suggest, please contact Pastor Jim via email at pastorjim@palmyrafirst.org or the church office number 717-838-2551.

Thanks to all of you who spread the word about Palmyra First Church. Your witness is vital to our growth. Letting others know what ministries we are involved in is one way can personally be in the business of **“Serving Christ, Changing Lives.”**



Confirmation Classes

Our online confirmation class, which includes 3 churches - Palmyra First, Emmanuel Church in Allentown, and Quakertown Church, continues to meet on Thursdays at 4:00 PM via Zoom. The youth are a very talkative group that are learning about the nature of God. In a very strange year, confirmation offers a bit of normalcy to a very strange time in the kids' lives.

We Have Reopened but Please Be Careful!

As most of you know, we have reopened the church for Sunday worship, while we are reopened, things are not "back to normal." We ask everyone to be considerate of the needs of others. To help everyone we have made some changes that include:

1. Having plenty of hand sanitizer available.
2. Using every other pew and alternating pews between the 2 services.
3. Asking everyone to wear a mask for your protection and the protection of others. Remember, many cases of COVID-19 are asymptomatic (meaning you may never know you have or had the virus) but are still contagious.
4. Please maintain a proper social distance. Of course, families can continue to sit together, since in all likelihood, if one of you has the virus it will spread at home.

The Blessed Misfits

Beginning in January the Blessed Misfits, our Wednesday evening study group, will begin a study of the book of Exodus and the journey of the ancient Israelites from slavery in Egypt to a nation that settled in the land we now call Israel. This book is foundational to Jewish identity but also Christian identity. We will examine the message of the book for us as Christians in 2021.

The group is always open to new members and is currently meeting via Zoom. To join the group contact Pastor Jim at pastorjim@palmyrafirst.org and he will send you the link to the meeting.

Our Awakenings Coffee Shop

Awakenings will reopen on January 5 at 8:30 AM. We look forward to meeting with you again in 2021! Bring a friend, a neighbor, or another family member with you. We will be giving updates in our Sunday News as to a new start date.

We wish you all a Happy New Year of good health and friendships.

- From Palmyra First Awakenings Coffee Shop



Community Aid Box Update for 2021

The Community Aid bin will remain in the Palmyra First parking lot for your donations. You can donate clothing, household items and more. The church receives \$.04 per pound for all donations and money received is split between Local Missions and The Caring Cupboard. If you have items that are fragile or too large, contact the office and we can open the bin for you.

Church Activities

If you have items, information, or K-group updates that you would like added to the Sunday News, Calendar or Newsletter, please see that Vickie receives the information by email. This way we can make sure the information is added as requested. If you have a schedule for the 2021 calendar year, you may email that information to Vickie at admin@palmyrafirst.org.

She will be scheduling the new 2021 activities on the calendar starting next week. Even if your K-groups, band, Choir, meetings stayed the same, could you please forward the information to Vickie for her to reference to the current facility usage carried over to 2021. There has been a lot of changes with COVID-19 and I would like to make sure we are not missing any facility or Zoom usages.

Christmas Thank You

Your heartwarming (sock) fullness adorned the church Christmas tree with over 100 pairs of socks for our local nursing homes. They will be warmly worn by residents of Heritage House, Kadima, and Columbia Cottage. You may still add socks to the tree up to January 3.

A great breakfast on November 21 served up by Pastor Jim and Dave Y. powered a crew of fifteen folks who cleaned and decorated our sanctuary in preparation for Advent and our Christmas Eve services. My very joyful thanks go out to all who helped and followed COVID-19 safety.

- Judy Delvernois





Discovery Dunes



Many thanks to the Advent Calendar helpers who provided the objects, wrapped them, and assembled them. Job well done! We hope the children enjoyed their Advent Journey and Christmas Celebration.

December Bible lessons centered on the birth of Christ. January's theme is the Ministry of Jesus.

Jan. 3 Boy Jesus in the Temple

Jan. 10 Jesus' Baptism

Jan. 17 Fishers of Men

Jan. 24 Jesus and Nicodemus

Jan. 31 Sent Out by Twos

Because of the COVID-19 situation, we are providing packages for Sunday School-age students. Each bag will provide the following for each lesson in January.

1. A short family explanation page of the story.
2. One lesson activity page depending on the age of the student. It could be a puzzle, maze, dot to dot, word search, or coloring page.
3. Craft
4. Snack

Please let us know if you want a January package for your child. There will still be teachers and helpers ready for your child should they come to church.

We need colorful flannel material for a snowman winter craft. Anyone willing to donate old flannel shirts or material, it would be greatly appreciated.

Mission projects this year have been:

August: Noah's Little Ark Preschool Welcome Banner

September: Dry Soup neighborhood delivery

October/November: Painted an 8-foot table, then the Discovery Dunes students put their colorful handprints on the table. This is to be used in the Awakenings Ministry.

December: We had planned to carol in the neighborhood but with the COVID-19 surge, we had to cancel for safety reasons.

Blessings to you from the Children's Ministry Staff. May your January be enjoyable!



Therapy or Our Times

The start date is uncertain as this session was originally planned as an in-person group. Our facilitator psychologist Linda Meashey is reevaluating our next steps. For more information about the plans feel free to email her at lmeashey@palmyrafirst.org.



Therapy For Our Times

Spiritually Centered, Professionally Facilitated
Group Counseling

Building Resilience in a Time of Chaos

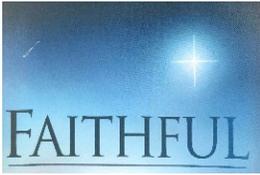
Sundays 2-3:30pm

Palmyra First UMC
520 E. Birch Street
Palmyra, Pa. 17078

Sliding scale fees

Linda Meashey, Licensed Psychologist
lmeashey@palmyrafirst.org
717-838-2551

Jim Anderman, Lead Pastor
pastorjim@palmyrafirst.org
717-838-2551



Thank you to the UMW for making Linda Webber's day sunny and bright, it is great to know that we have such a great group of women in such a wonderful congregation. During these trying times, it is the small gestures that make such a great impact for our members.



Thanks to the UMW from Shirley and Norm Yingst

Thank you for all the cards during the year and for the Christmas Bag you gave to Norm, that was so thoughtful. He loves his treats.
God Bless you all for thinking of him.
Shirley Yingst

Reminder:

The **February** newsletter **deadline will be on Thursday, January 14th.** I have extended the February newsletter deadline, with coming out of a holiday and getting back on our regular routines we will have a couple of extra days for the Newsletter.

Central PA Blood Drive Coming in February

The PACC Blood Drive will be held on Saturday, February 20, 2021 in the Fellowship Hall. Donation times will be from 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM. Look for more information in our February Tower Tidings.

