

From Pastor Steve's Desk...

(This is the next installment of an ongoing series of articles regarding what we believe, why we believe it, and why it matters. *In the United Methodist Church, there is change coming.* Within our Global denomination, we have some serious divergent views on the authority of scripture, human sexuality, and what that means in the world and in our church. We aren't sure what the changes will look like, but we know that in order to respond to God's call to be the church in the 21st century, the anchor of our doctrinal identity, we need to know what that is. So, I invite you to join me on this journey for God's glory and to build up the church.)

...on doctrine...

Part 8 - Of Free Will

I'm glad you've chosen to pick up this copy of the GraceNotes, the newsletter of the Panama United Methodist Church. You can that God <u>right now</u> because you have the ability to choose. In fact, our privilege of free will is what makes life rich and interesting. It also is the opportunity we have to choose life in Jesus Christ as opposed to death in bondage to sin and corruption. This month, we will take a closer look at free will, which comes on the heels of last month's look at original sin, appearing in large part because of God's gift of choice in our lives. Please choose to read on...

Here's what Article of Religion * says about this: The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will. (From The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church - 2004. Copyright 2004 by The United Methodist Publishing House.)

From this Article, we might think that all is hopeless and pointless in life without the grace of God. Exactly! However, when we choose to be in concert with God's plan, our will becomes God's will and, working together, our choices, decisions, plans, and desires become clearly enmeshed with God's.

As we journey through life, we try every day to make our own path, to set ourselves up for success, protect our assets and those we love, cope with stress, fear, and danger, and attempt to control our surroundings. These are responses to our human nature, our culture, and the sin that is a reality in our lives and the lives of everyone around us. We think that we can use our *natural* strength to do good things. This is akin to driving your car without giving any thought to the people, technology, and practice that made it possible for you to be able to drive that car.

(Continued on the next page)

From Pastor Steve's Desk...(continued)

This is in contrast to widening our worldview to understand that our decisions are never made in isolation. That all we are and all we have is affected by those around us, by our decisions, and ultimately, by a loving God who calls us to Himself. God expects us to strive to understand His plan for each of us, our church, and our world. When we submit to loving God, following God's commands, and growing as Christian disciples, then our free will becomes truly free. We choose to follow Christ, choose to love our neighbors, and choose to worship the Lord. All our other decisions flow freely from those decisions.

As we start a New Year, choose to be together in learning to be disciples (student followers of Jesus). No Other choice you make will better guide you on the Christian journey, to choose life in Jesus Christ. We have many willing and trained leaders who will be your guides and friends. See you there!

Shalom, Pastor Steve

Next: Part 9 - Of the Justification of Man



Jeff Carver writes, "It has been said, 'He who buries his talent is making a grave mistake.' How true this statement is for so many Christians. God has given each believer a spiritual gift that He wants us to use for His glory, but we often don't use it. We may deny that we actually have a spiritual gift or if we do acknowledge it, we may doubt its usefulness to glorify God, and then just bury it. But we must realize that God wants us to be involved with His work. He is so gracious that by His Holy Spirit He freely distributes gifts to all who are saved. He not only wants us to know our spiritual gifts, but He expects us to grow in them each day.

The Bible says in Ephesians 4:7 'But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.' Also in 1 Corinthians 12:7 it says 'To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.' Then in verse 11 it states 'But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.' So it is clear that each Christian has a spiritual gift. You may ask, 'So what are they for? How do I use my gift (or gifts)? Does God really want to use me?"

Starting January 13, in worship, we will be starting to answer these questions. This worship series is called Catalyst. A catalyst is defined as a substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction without itself undergoing any permanent chemical change. (https://www.dictionary.com/browse/catalyst) Our spiritual gifts are catalysts that increase the effectiveness of God's kingdom mission in the world by mobilizing every believer to serve others in Jesus' name using their primary spiritual gifts. We will look at what the bible teaches about spiritual gifts, what they are for, and how to use them. We will explore the different categories of gifts and how God wants to use those in the church and in the world. Maybe you've taken a spiritual gifts inventory and know how to use your spiritual gifts. If you haven't, and even if you have, this series will help grow the church through spiritual gifts. Let's change the world together!

SUNDAY Morning Team - JANUARY

USHERS

George and Trudy Anderson
Pat and Kristy Catanese

NURSERY HELPERS

January 6

Birth-2: Jenn Johnson and Dawn Sard January 13

Birth-2: Kim Davis and Debbie Donelson
January 20

Birth-2: Tina Akam and Natalie Odell January 27

Birth-2: Marge and Graham Vollmer

Thank you for volunteering to take care of our little ones during the worship service.

We appreciate you! Currently, we are scheduling people to serve in one nursery only During this time, if and when it becomes apparent that we need an older nursery, too, we will be asking for additional help on that Sunday morning. If something comes up and you cannot serve, please trade with someone or find a replacement. You may call Debbie in the Church office (M-TH) by calling 782-4031.

FREE Blood Pressures and Fasting Blood

Sugars (fast 4 hours prior) are offered at PUMC, the first Sunday of every month in Pastor's office.

Please enter the Pastor's office via the hallway door.



Sunday Morning Coffee Hour

Coffee, tea, and light snacks, are available on Sunday mornings, from 8:30 until 10:15am. Please join us!

If you feel like baking and would like to supply some "goodies" for the freezer in the kitchen, donations of cookies, coffee braids (...or whatever you might be making that would freeze well) would be gratefully accepted. They can be brought in at any time. If you put them in the freezer during the week, please label them as "Hospitality". We will be sure to put them to good use some Sunday morning. We thank you in advance for your generosity.

The Hospitality Team is getting excited about the "café" area just inside the entrance of our new building. We are not sure of our needs at this point but we DO know that we will be looking for more Sunday morning café helpers. We are hopeful that YOU will want to be a part of it!

A CONNECTIONS Opportunity for YOU!

The Connections team is looking for volunteers to come to the Connections after school program and spend some time with the kids.

Do you have a craft you'd like to share? A story? A new game to play?

Please contact Stacy Taylor if you would be willing to share your time with the beautiful children who come to our church every day after school.

PUMC POST OFFICE

The Missions Team would like to thank you for your support of the PUMC Christmas Post Office. "Postage donations" exceeded \$300 this year. Your donations support the various missions projects of the PUMC, local and around the world.



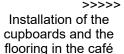
CENTERPOINT

CAMPAIGN CORNER

DECEMBER CONSTRUCTION PICTURES



<><< Laying the carpet in the gathering/café space



Window into the new office





Completing work on the new entrance just off of the parking lot

>>>> Night view of new addition with outside lights



CENTERPOINT UPDATE

A list of items and costs for furnishing the new space God is providing us to use for His glory can be found in this newsletter.

We ask that you please prayerfully consider a special gift for this cause. These gifts are above the commitment you already made to the campaign. You can give online or write it on your envelope.

Please designate how much and where you wish the money to go.

We received \$13,744 during the month of November.

That makes a total contribution to date of \$540,952.67

This total is 60% of our new goal of \$904,347.07.

We thank you for your continued support of the CenterPoint campaign. If you have questions about your commitment, feel free to contact me at any time.

Cindy Cartwright

January 20, 2019
CenterPoint Grand Opening/Open House
Watch for additional information!

W.A.M. Women and Missions

If you aren't busy on Monday, January 14, W.A.M. will be meeting at NOON at PUMC. Please bring your own lunch and any ideas on how to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Join us for this time of fellowship.

We are still collecting soup labels and box tops, postage stamps and change. If you know of anyone who has been in the hospital or may need some help with meals, please let Kathy Foulk know and we will arrange for some meals to be taken in.



God's Groceries Food Pantry

(at the 4 corners of Panama)

Monday Morning: 9-10am Monday Evening: 6-7pm Thursday Evening: 5-7pm

Questions? See Tina Swineford

...Missions and Outreach...

JANUARY Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 1 Carl Anderson
- 3 Caroline Apthorpe, Erin Miller, Reese McGaffick Pam Sali, *Shaun/Amy Hummel*
- 4 Cliff Reardon, Isaac Landin
- 5 Kimberly Barton, Betty Johnson
- 6 Jeff Ireland
- 7 David Rowe, Andrew Apthorpe
- 8 Claire Apthorpe, Mathis Baehr
- 9 Aubriana Dominey, Dennis Furlow, Jan Wheeler
- 10 Jacob Caldwell, Patrick Caldwell
- 13 Amanda Pekelnicky
- 16 Bob Gleason
- 17 Bronson Edwards
- 18 Jon Komarek
- 19 Don Garfield
- 22 Marcey Larson
- 24 Ian Ellsworth (Peck)
- 25 Kevin Beckerink, Linda Wood
- 27 Alexandria Davis

Looking ahead to February...

- 2 Kevin Rowe, Marissa Trisket
- 3 Eric Scolton, AnnaVandeVelde
- 4 Willson Baer, Sheila White, Howie Wheeler
- 5 Jeff Enlow, Bill Schneider
- 6 Carl (TC) Davis III, Brenda Ireland

Looking For Something To DO?

Please check the PUMC January calendar for meetings and events which you might like to attend. The calendar can be found on the last page of this edition of the newsletter.

We hope you can find something of interest to you.

If the names of your immediate family are not included on our monthly birthday/anniversary list, please drop a note into the Newsletter mailbox in the office workroom or let Debbie in the office know. (First and last names as well as birthday and or anniversary dates). We would like to include you and yours!

CONNECTIONS

Thank you for continuing to support our Connections team.

We gave gift bags to every family in attendance for Christmas.

Our staff is a blessing and we are very thankful for them!

Just a reminder...
We continue to need snacks
for the children in our
after school program.

You can leave your food donations In the hallway buckets. We thank you, in advance, for your generosity.

A Taylor Thank-you

Thank you to the wonderful PUMC congregation for your love and support in 2018. It was an incredible year for our church and family. We are looking forward to 2019 and what God has in store for all of us!

On June 15, Abigail will be getting married in our sanctuary and the reception will follow in our new fellowship hall.

Please mark your calendars as you are all invited, and an invitation, including RSVP, will be in the bulletin in May.

God's blessings to you in 2019.

Stacy

SUNDAY DISCIPLESHIP HOUR UPDATE Adult Sunday School Class; Jon Cable

Jon Cable's class is studying the A,B, C's...no not those..., but Answers Bible Curriculum. It's an apologetics class where you will learn to defend your faith by studying and learning about God's Word and why it is to be our absolute authority on all matters. I feel one of the most important verses in the Bible is 1Peter3:15 which says that we are to be prepared or to have a ready defense as to the hope we have in Christ. We are to know what we believe and why.

Why is this important? Because we live in a world that is becoming more and more about a man's view or a secular world view on matters of life and death rather than living by God and His infallible word, the Bible. This class teaches you about life from a worldly point of view vs. a biblical world view; living by man's thinking or God's thinking; living a life on sandy soil, or a life on the rock. We are talking about what the Bible is all about, starting in Genesis and how it all fits together in the biblical world view.

This class is not about teaching you how to convince others about following Christ and why they should read the Bible better, but about having a ready answer for their questions and to provide a choice for them. Most people don't feel they have a choice but to believe what they believe, but we need to show them the light of Christ and to show them that he is the way, truth, and life and why he is all that and then some so they can choose for themselves. We can't do it for them, just show them the way.

This class will help. Joshua 24 says that we are to choose this day whom we will serve - those "other" gods, or the one true God. Again I ask, do you know what you believe and why so as to be better prepared to offer others the one true choice. This class will help. We meet in the library on Sunday mornings at 9am. Please join us.



Bible Quizzing Becky Cable

Our "Living Water" team is doing fabulous in competition. We finished in 2nd place at our December 8th Quiz! Juliana Graham earned Top Rookie and tied for 7th overall!! So proud of these young men & women. They are also gearing up for the National Tournament April 24-27, 2019 in Green Lake, Wisconsin. We've done well with sugar scrub sales and we are planning a fundraiser spaghetti dinner in the Spring. The cost of the trip is~\$500 per quizzer.

Thank you for praying as we press on with John 11:38-57, 13, 17, 18:1-14 and 21 for our January 5th quiz. Keep the team & Tami Brewer in prayer as they carry on while we are in Thailand. They will continue practicing each week and will attend the February 2nd quiz. Stop in some Thursday evening to say hi!

Mark your calendars....

January 6 - Take down Christmas decorations following church

January 9 - Kelsey, our worship intern, arrives in Buffalo

January 13 - Spiritual Gifts sermon series begins

January 19 - Movies/Games/Dance Family Fun Night!

August 18 - 24, 2019 - Mission Trip to Red Bird Mission

Panama United Methodist Church Mission Statement

We seek to love the Lord God by introducing people to His Son, Jesus Christ, and helping these relationships to grow.

Wedding Congratulations

Ashley Strahley
and
Anthony (Tony) Sali
were married on September 29, 2018.
Tony is a professor at Wake Forest
University and Ashley works at UNC
in the public health field.
They are at home at
134 Sunset Circle, Unit 304
Greensboro, NC 27408

Erica Ireland
And
David Dix
were married at the Harbor Hotel
on December 22, 2018
by Rev. Steven M. Taylor.
They are at home at
463 Orchard Road
Jamestown, NY 14701

God is the author of yet another chapter in your lives. May you be richly blessed as your future, together, unfolds. The love and blessings from your PUMC family are with you today...and always.

Parish Nurse Recipe Jody Marsh

Three Ingredient Chocolate Cake
1 ripe banana
1 egg, beaten
1 Tbsp. cocoa powder
Beat the ingredients together until smooth. Pour into a large mug, coated with cooking spray.

ENJOY!!

Microwave for 2-3 minutes.

<<<< Just One 4 Others >>>>

Watch for more information to be announced!

LUNCH BUNCH

Don't forget <u>LUNCH BUNCH</u> on <u>January 16th</u> at Panama Baptist Church at 11:45am.

> QUESTIONS? Contact Kathy Foulk or call the church office

CenterPoint - Furnishings and Equipment "Connecting God's Vision to our Community"

It is a blessing to have reached the point where we need to begin to purchase furnishings and equipment for the CenterPoint addition. Below are the areas of need and a list of items to be purchased for those areas. We ask that you spend time in prayer and, if led, please donate to help support the furnishings of the new addition.

Fellowship Hall: 72" round folding tables; folding table dollies; banquet chairs; chair caddy; flat screen to CenterPoint Café: Bar height tables; barstools; Bunn, Twin Coffee Brewer

<u>Kitchen:</u> Wall oven/microwave combo unit; additional table settings due to the increased seating capacity

<u>Audio and Video:</u> In the new addition only; This includes audio and video feeds from the Sanctuary to the new Children's Ministry areas, Fellowship Hall and Gallery. There will be audio only feed from the Sanctuary to the Kitchen.

<u>Nursery:</u> New nursery items, including but not limited to compartment storage cabinets, toy organizer, rugs, chairs, tables, stepping stones, shape and play obstacle course, etc.

We are excited to announce that donations have already been received to fully furnish the new Conference Room and we have received funds from the Memorial Fund to help support some of the necessary furnishings in the new addition.

> Total donated to date = \$16,000 Total still needed = #37,758

JANUARY 2019

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Reverend Steven M. Taylor, Lead Pastor steven.taylor@panamaum.org **Candy Scarem, Director of Student Ministries** candy.scarem@panamaum.org Debbie Johnson, Ministry Coordinator/Admin. Asst. debbie.johnson@panamaum.org Julie Nagel, Music Director/Accompanist Krista Odell, Accompanist Jody Marsh, Parish Nurse Jon Cable, Custodian Sandy Crossley, Connections Joan Monroy, Connections **Tara Hosier, Connections** Dr. Mark and Diane Abbott, Spain Blog: www.markabbott007.com Rev. Paul D. Caseman, Alaska

> Pastor Steve's Office Hours 9:00am - Noon: M, W and Th

Church Phone (716) 782-4031 Church Fax # (716) 782-2326 Church E-mail – contact@panamaum.org Church website - www.panamaum.org www.facebook.com/panamaum Please check the calendar inside for weekly meetings and activities for the month of January.

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