



GRACE NOTES - April 2020

Panama United Methodist Church

Rev. Steven M, Taylor, Lead Pastor

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. Next year, it's anticipated that the UMC will divide into two or more branches. One will be more progressive/liberal and the other more traditional/conservative. 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 24 - On Christian Men's Goods

As you read this article, I pray you have been reflecting on that for which you are thankful and been joining in online worship during this global crisis. But what is our response to all that thanking and praising? What is it that we should DO since we have agreed that we are extremely blessed that God provides for our needs when we need them and pours our grace through his Son?

Well, one response might be found in Acts 4:32 as Luke writes, "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had." Seems people in the Christian community sold land, from time to time, and gave what they had to the Apostles and it was distributed. The extreme of that, of course, is that everything we have is everyone else's and we are communal with all we have. On the other hand, what's mine is mine and what's yours is yours and that's that.

Clearly, being part of the Christian community today means we acknowledge that all we have has been provided by God, and should be returned to God as he leads. Primarily, the pathway to giving is the church with which we are a part.

In the early days of the Methodist Church, it seems that there was a group of people claiming that in order to be part of the church, all your possessions and all your money were required to be pooled together for the good of the group. That is the extreme stance on what has the intent to be something much more spiritual than just giving everything we have away. It's a matter of the heart.

Here's what Article of Religion 24 of the Methodist Church says: *The riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.* (From The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church - 2016. Copyright 2016 by The UM Publishing House.)

The intent, we see, is for each person or family to give to those in need in the church and community, according to their ability. That ability may change over time, in different seasons, or as God leads us. At no point in the Bible does Jesus command us universally to give all our possessions away to each other - that is, unless our possessions are causing a barrier between us and God (as was the case for the Rich Young Ruler in Luke 18).

(Continued on next page)

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.

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

Our response to having been given provisions and health is to find ways to generously give away all we can in order to do the best we can with a cheerful heart and mind.

Still hearing the echo from our worship ringing in our ears reminds us that what we have is ultimately not ours to keep, but ours to give away in acts of obedience and love to others who do not have. This season, as we celebrate and anticipate the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to give AND receive. All that we have is not everyone else's to have. But all that we have is a testimony to what God has done in our lives, through our gifts and Jesus. God will show you how much and when to give as your generous heart beats with the love of Christ for others in mission.

Shalom,
Pastor Steve

Next: Part 25 - Of a Christian Man's Oath

Season of Easter 2020 (April 1 - April 12)

[RE]FRAME/HOLY WEEK

- 4.09.20 **Maundy Thursday Livestream @7pm (ONLINE ONLY)**
- 4.10.20 **Good Friday Worship @7pm (ONLINE ONLY)**
- 4.11.20 **Walk to the Crosses Worship @6pm (ONLINE ONLY)**
- 4.12.20 **Resurrection Sunday! @ 10:15AM (ONLINE ONLY)**
- 4.19.20 **Confirmation and Baptism Sunday (POSTPONED)**
- 4.26.20 **Guest Preacher - Rev. Jim Pegan (ONLINE ONLY)**

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, our normal PUMC programming has been greatly curtailed. In trying to keep a sense of normalcy, it was decided to create a monthly Grace Notes for the month of April. It is not possible, at this time, to post upcoming events, past the Easter season. These kind of posts usually fill up the newsletter. In an attempt to provide you with quality articles, we have specifically asked for a couple newsletter submissions from our "ranks". We hope you find them interesting and of value during this difficult time.

Even our littlest disciples are encouraged to "attend" online worship at PUMC. Leah (on the left) is engaged in a Children's Moment by Pastor Steve. Lyla (on the right) is enjoying the praise music, shared by Pastor Steve and Christopher.



APRIL Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 1 Caleb Caldwell, Aydn Hay, Rex Marsh
- 2 Joshua Cable
- 3 Kylie Schnars
- 4 Bill Caldwell, Sam Catanese, Ben Taylor, Tara Hosier
- 6 Janice Franklin
- 7 Derek Hosier, Kyle Hosier
- 8 ***Jon/Becky Cable***
- 10 Maddeline Wheeler
- 11 Shawn Chapman, Alexandria King
- 12 Emily Waller
- 13 Pastor Steve Taylor
- 14 Kennadee Mosher
- 15 Paula Komarek
- 16 Tom Baer
- 17 Tina Swineford
- 20 Donna Peterson
- 21 Tim Middleton
- 22 Jean Trisket, Cam James, Jeff Ostrander, Chuck Parkman, ***Bob/Diane Johnson***
- 23 Larissa Enlow, Tyler Marsh
- 24 Elinor Sturges, Gracie Cable
- 25 ***Dave/Joan Hinderer***
- 26 Paula McCordic
- 27 David Auge, Calvin Carr
- 28 Cindy Cartwright, ***Warren/Cindy Crouch***
- 30 Jolene Ayres, ***Dan/Paula Weslowski***

<<PROGRAMMING NOTE>>

**The Drive-through
Easter Egg Hunt,
previously scheduled for
Saturday April 11
has
been
Postponed!**

During this time of crisis, Katie Moore (Luke's wife) suffered a stroke. She was taken to Westfield Hospital and then transferred to Hamot. She is currently in a facility in Erie undergoing rehab. If you would like to send a card, please send them to her at:

Catherine Moore
Encompass Health Rehab; Room 237 W
143 East 2nd St..
Erie, PA 16507

...JustOne4Others...

Last year brought love to others by helping collect health and beauty items. Let's continue this love in 2020!

January - Body Soap

February - Shampoo

March - Conditioner

April - Q-tips

**(If purchasing during the pandemic,
please keep your donation at home
until the time we can
collect them in Jody's office.)**

May - Cotton Balls

June - Lotion

July - Hand Soap

August - Toothpaste

September - Toothbrushes

October - Mouthwash

November - Deodorant

December - Floss

Each month you are encouraged to purchase and donate "ONE" of the items listed above. These will be offered to our Food Pantry, Panama Central School, Love INC and Jamestown Missions. Questions? See Jody, our Parish Nurse.

Decisions - Shared and Not!
Carol Hay

There are serious discussions taking place within the United Methodist Church right now. We are faced with the reality that we all don't agree on every issue. Of course, in this day of shared decision making, we have the involvement of many voices hoping to make the best decisions possible.

Personally, I don't know when we ever all agreed on decisions within the church (or anywhere - school, an organization, marriage, parenting, etc.). I remember spending six months with a committee trying to pick out the color to rebind the hymnals in one church. And another time, the design of the church bulletin took on a life of its own. Of course, whether the choir should or should not wear robes could cause a debate worthy of prime-time television.

Well, now we are all home, practicing social distancing and isolation. Like many of you, I belong to various organizations that need to make decisions so we get together on Zoom! (As most of you know, Zoom is an online app that allows multiple people to have a face-to-face meeting via a computer, while being in various locations.) Some of my other meetings have been done on the phone only - a conference call. I prefer the phone conference call to Zoom. For Zoom meetings, I need to do something with my hair, wear a sweat-shirt that doesn't have a frayed collar or a salsa drip spot from lunch, and position my computer so others cannot see the piles of papers waiting to be sorted or the vacuum that I hope to use later in the day. At least with the phone conferences, I just need to sound awake! So we discuss agenda items and make decisions while not being in the same room. It does work.

Of course the socially responsible thing to right now is to stay home to avoid spreading any illness, but especially Covid 19. So families are at home - together 24/7. This also means shared decision-making. Families are working together to decide how best to schedule the day, who will be responsible for meals, and the best uses for shared spaces. I have heard from family and friends that sharing in the decision-making is new to some areas of homemaking and family time. Apparently, weighing in on menu choices, how to vacuum effectively and why we make beds when you just get in them again can lead to a glitch in the shared decision making process. (One thing about living alone, there is no shared decision making as a project goes forward. No arguments, no negotiations - just make the decision and do it. Of course, that could be why I ended up with a Futon in the spare bedroom - a Futon - really?)

Life is precious and protecting each other from illness is a blessing. I've seen concern expressed in so many ways - from gifts left on doorsteps to car parades to celebrate a special event. I hope on the other side of this health crisis, we remember the good things and can make decisions together with love for each other and guided by our Lord and Master. Shared decision-making will continue - it is a part of life. Whether we do it face-to-face, online or over the phone, we all need to listen to each other, try to understand different points of view, and make the best decisions we can with the information we have at the time.

I hope you had a laugh or two while reading this and still take to heart our need to make thoughtful decisions. I'm going to go take a nap on that Futon!



VILLAGE OF HOPE - HAITI

As many of you know, we returned from Haiti last month. The political unrest continued to impact our ability to serve. We were blessed with the hiring of Maryse Sterlin as Field Director to replace us. She is a strong, capable Haitian who has had much experience with overseeing non-profits in Haiti. She knows the government regulations, the local banking systems, and is experienced with American culture having spent many years in the states.

Village of Hope has suspended all mission team trips for the balance of 2020. This decision was made prior to the corona virus that has also surfaced in Haiti. The school and the health center have been closed due to the virus as the government has implemented the same standards as we have here. We can only imagine the hardship that this will bring to a county like Haiti. The medical infrastructure is weak at best not to mention the lack of personal space and clean water and soap much less necessary medical supplies.

VOH is committed to serving the Haitian people. Donations can be made through PUMC giving, with VOH entered in the memo field or mailed to Village of Hope, 300 East Yamato Road, Boca Raton, FL 33431, or online at villageofhopehaiti.org.

Please keep Haiti in your prayers.

Blessings,

Bert and Roberta

God's Groceries Food Pantry

can be accessed by using the
Church Street entrance.

Look for signs.

If there is a need, please call the church
office for additional information.
(782-4031)

Monday Morning: 9-10am

Monday Evening: 6-7pm

Thursday Evening: 5-7pm

...Missions and Outreach...

Grace Notes Birthday and Anniversary Calendar

If you are new to the PUMC (or for some reason we do not have your birthday or anniversary information), please leave Pam a note in the "Newsletter" mailbox in the workroom so we can add you to the list.

We would simply need your first and last name as well as your dates to be added.

With Sympathy to the family of...

*Betty Rae Nittiskie
Sister of Roberta (Bert) Anderson*

*Marilyn W. Dills
11/6/35 - 3/20/20
Mother of Jim (Jena) Dills
Contributions may be made to Crossroads House
PO Box 403, Batavia, NY 14021*

*The love and prayers of the church and
community are with you and your loved ones as you continue through this time
of grief and adjustment.*

Well, here goes...

Hello, Church,

I've been reminiscing that the last couple of weeks of my youth, especially Easter. I don't ever remember my parents going to church Easter Sunday.

Yet, we (seven kids) always had new outfits. The girls always had a new hat and we boys always had a tie to wear to church on Easter morning. I remember all the "families", the moms and dads in their finest, filling the church.

I never thought much about it until I had a family of my own and started the same tradition, new clothes and church on Easter Sunday. Only one thing was different - we went as a family. I love looking through the old pictures and seeing my children dressed in their new clothes and sometimes, all three of them were smiling! We always took pictures before church, because they didn't look the same when we got home (if you know what I mean!).

I think of times past, in my early walk and how one year we did a Maundy Thursday service that revolved totally on the foot washing. One year, we did a Good Friday service starting at noon. I was chosen to carry the Cross to the first church, then someone else carried it to the next church, and so on. At each church there was a short service. From church to church we gathered more people. It was amazing...at 3:00 we were all gathered (maybe 300) at Shinglehouse UMC. Easter morning as the sun was rising over our beautiful valley, we met at the park for a worship service which was very meaningful. I want that excitement! I want us to be excited! This is meaningful! This is not just another day! **THIS IS THE DAY JESUS WALKED OUT OF HIS GRAVE.** To quote Pastor Steve, "the only man to every walk out of His own grave!"

Just think, in less than two weeks is our "Walk to the Crosses"; the week of 4/6/20. We need to push ourselves, to be excited, to be the light in this part of God's Creation. We (I) need to be excited even if we are isolated. We will always remember Easter 2020. It will be a story that our children will tell their children and grandchildren...like my stories.

Let us be a footnote..."Remember Easter 2020 when.....the people of PUMC did ??? LET'S PRESS ON!

Love you all of my church family. I pray you make new memories this Easter.
Your Brother in Christ Jesus our Lord,
Howie Wheeler, Sr.



BIBLE QUIZZING

By Faith placed first for the 2019-2020 season! Woo-Hoo!! Our team worked hard all year and their work was rewarded. Gracie and Juliana placed 3rd and 5th, respectively out of all 55 quizzers. Josh, Jubal, Gracie and Juliana participated in the Crystal Tournament in Corning on March 13-14 and did great! Josh, Juliana and Gracie placed among the top 7 quizzers of the tournament! Unfortunately, the National Tournament that was to be held in Pittsburgh, has been canceled. Thankfully, the kids were able to end the season on a high note in Corning.

All of our fundraising proceeds are in the bank and will be used for the 2020-2021 season. Thanks to all of you who have so faithfully supported us with your donations and prayers. Even though we won't be participating in Nationals, God's word has been sown in these diligent hearts and it will accomplish much for God's glory!

**“Casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.”
1 Peter 5:7**

**“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”
Hebrews 13:8**

Blessings,
Becky Cable, **By Faith**, coach

He is risen...He is risen, indeed!



God's Words Carol Hay

When Doug was diagnosed with cancer and during the eleven months of treatment and care, we relied heavily on our faith for courage and strength to deal with whatever happened each day - and it seemed like each day was something new and different. The devotional books we used were filled with scriptures that worked perfectly with what was happening in our lives - and each time, we would exclaim, "How did God know I needed those words today?"

Doug's obituary was in the newspaper three days after his death - on our forty-Seventh anniversary. My devotional for August 23 started with the words, "Entrust your loved ones to me; release them into my protective care. They are much safer with me than in your clinging hands." (Jesus Calling by Sarah Young) Of course, I sobbed through that reading, but also so strongly felt the arms of God around me and peace in my soul.

Now, as I read devotional materials each day during this coronavirus crisis in our world, I often think how perfect the words are for what is going on in our lives - the fear and helplessness we feel seems to be addressed by words written months ago for this particular day. This applicability of devotional words or scripture passages has happened over and over - and again today with the Upper Room - *Trust in God at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge* (Psalm 62:8) and the Thought for the Day - *God is my greatest source of comfort*.

Once more I pondered, "How could these perfect words always come at the right time?" As I watched dawn push aside the dark sky, I thought of course God's words would always be appropriate for what we are feeling or for our situation. God's words can be interpreted in so many ways, and they will always give comfort, peace, joy and hope to our lives.

UPDATE FROM PASTOR STEVE AND THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Dear Panama UMC friends,

Join us on Livestream at 10:15am on Sunday mornings (<https://livestream.com/panamaum>). Once you get to the Livestream landing page, simply look for the REFRAIME graphic that is for the date you are watching. You can watch past worship services on this landing page as well. You DO NOT need to Log In or Go Live. This is a free service and open to all.

As you connect and prepare for worship, check in on the chat to let us know you're watching. Any prayer requests, praises, glory sightings, or greetings can be submitted through that Chat system as well.

Also, Online Giving is always available and now might be a great time to check that out. The link to online giving is on our webpage (www.panamaum.org). Do your best to maintain giving during this time, but know we certainly understand the financial implications of this situation.

Finally, know that we are holding the church, our community, our world, our leaders, and you in our prayers during this time. If you have a need or know of a need, please don't hesitate to call the office at 716/782-4031.

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

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 **April**.

Cornerstone District Office
Christ First UMC
663 Lakeview Ave.
Jamestown, NY 14701
(716) 665-2423



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