

# Tower Tidings

March 2026

Palmyra First United Methodist Church



Last month, I encouraged you to use the season of Lent as first intended – as a preparation for Easter and the new life promised in Christ. I encouraged you to take up or renew spiritual practice rather than simply fasting from something. I asked you to spend extra time in prayer, Bible reading, or spend time doing acts of kindness.

Did you take me up on the challenge? I hope so. If you did, how are you doing?

If you have slipped and strayed away from your goals, it's not too late to begin again. If you haven't yet made such a commitment, now is a fine time to start.

Making changes in our lives and habits is a hard thing to do, but, as with any attempt to break bad habits, we need to take one day, and one step at a time. It is also helpful to focus on one bad habit at a time rather than trying for a complete makeover in one fell swoop.

When we are trying to put bad practices firmly in the past, our first step is to prayerfully ask God for some help with the issue. Have a conversation with God explaining what you feel, what led you to change, and why that change is important. Ask for assistance from the Holy Spirit to guide you away from your bad habits, hurts, and hang-ups. But don't just ask, listen to the answer, and follow God's plan. Remember, with God, all things are possible, and you are not alone. God wants us to live our best lives and will provide help in times of need. Help may be in the form of *Celebrate Recovery*, a therapist, counselor, pastor, or maybe a friend with a listening ear and good advice.

As we move closer to the remembrance of Good Friday and the Easter resurrection, I am recommitting myself to leading a better life. Please join in a renewed effort to live your life the way God intended. Make **"Serving Christ, Changing Lives"** your way of life and not just a slogan.

This Lenten season, I continue to pray that all of us will be drawn ever closer to God through our Savior Jesus Christ.

Grace & Peace,

James D. Anderman, Pastor



March is completely within the season of Lent so our focus will be on the ways we can please God by the way we live our lives. The month will be filled with special music as our Bell Choir will be playing three times and the children of *Noah's Little Ark Christian Preschool* will be singing on Palm Sunday, March 29th. Our liturgical color for the month will be purple, the color of royalty and the color we use for seasons of preparation.

With Easter just around the corner, now is the perfect time to invite relatives, neighbors, and friends to join you at church, so please extend a friendly invitation.

Our worship themes for the Sundays of March and early April are as follows:

**March 1<sup>st</sup> – Second Sunday in Lent:** At times, the church has struggled with the competing ideas of “Works Righteousness vs. Grace by Faith Alone.” This week, we look at both Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 and John 3:1-17 as we too will wrestle with these concepts. While we may not be able to buy a staircase to heaven, we still may have an opportunity to “See the Kingdom of Heaven.” Our service will include musical selections by our Bell Choir.

**March 8<sup>th</sup> - Third Sunday in Lent:** Both Exodus 17:1-7 and John 4:5-24 feature thirsty people. In both cases, the people were provided with what they needed. In a day and age of indoor plumbing and running water, “What Do You Thirst For?” Our message will focus on quenching that thirst.

**March 15<sup>th</sup> – Fourth Sunday in Lent:** Sometimes we become stuck in the past, finding comfort in the way things were, and try to recreate the past. We do so without considering how things could be better. This week, we will read two stories of people who are reluctant to admit the need for change. Our first story comes from 1 Samuel 16:1-5 and the second from John 9:1-41. Our message will be “Considering Change.” This week, we will also have as our special guest, Tiffany Franck of the *Lancaster Lebanon Habitat for Humanity* present to explain a bit about their work. In addition, our Bell Choir will be presenting something new in the form of music.

**March 22<sup>nd</sup> – Fifth Sunday in Lent:** What does it mean to have “New Life in Christ?” This week, we will examine the issue as we read from both Ezekiel 37:1-14 and John 11:1-45. What is the purpose of these two stories? Are we ready to experience “New Life?”

**March 29<sup>th</sup> – Palm Sunday:** This Sunday marks the start of Holy Week and is the day we celebrate Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In celebration, we will have special music from both the *Noah's Little Ark* kids and the Bell Choir. Our message, based on Philippians 2:5-11 and Matthew 21:1-11, will reflect on the crowd. Did their shouts of “Hosanna to the Son of David” have any meaning, or were they just caught up in the moment? Do our pledges of loyalty to Jesus have meaning, or are we just caught up in the movement? Our message is titled, “Observer or Disciple?”

**April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Holy Thursday:** We will again be cooperating with our neighboring *United Methodists* as we gather at Campbelltown UMC at 7:00 PM for our Holy Thursday. Using 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 and John 13:1-17, 31b-35, our message will ask a simple question, “Who Needs Washing.” Pastor Jim will deliver the message.



**April 3<sup>rd</sup> – Good Friday:** For Good Friday, we will gather at Gravel Hill as we remember the day God allowed himself to be crucified on a cross. Our service will be a service of “Tenebrae” or “Gathering Darkness” as we read the entire passion narrative interspersed with music to reenforce the story of Jesus sacrifice on the cross and what it can mean for us today. The readings will be from John 18:1-19:42.

**April 5<sup>th</sup> – Easter SonRise in the Outdoor Chapel at the Seltzer Retreat Center:** Once again, we will gather outside on the hill at the *Seltzer Retreat Center*, located at 183 Lindbergh Dr. in North Londonderry Township. This will be a joint service celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Participating churches include Bethany, Campbelltown, and Palmyra First. Matthew Davis will be our preacher for the morning. In the event of rain, we will move into the *Seltzer Lodge*.

**April 5<sup>th</sup> – Easter Sunday (in the Sanctuary at Birch and Green Streets):** Easter celebrates God’s victory over evil, sin, and death. It remembers the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who died on Good Friday, on a cross. Our readings will include Peter’s reflections on Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection as well as Matthew’s account of Jesus first post resurrection appearance, which was made to two women named Mary. Readings will be Acts 10:34-43 and Matthew 28:1-10. Our message is titled “Practicing Righteousness.”

## Palmyra First's United Women in Faith

During the month of March, *United Women in Faith* participants are encouraged to pick up one of the **Call to Prayer brochures** at the Welcome Desk. These have a sampling of the many missions and ministries *U.W. in Faith* supports. This year, we are highlighting the mission initiatives with hands-on ministries. Members and friends are encouraged to include these institutions in your prayers during Lent and throughout the year.

Also in March, *U.W. in Faith* will be decorating cookies to support two of the Mission Committee’s projects: The *HUB* disaster supplies and *Rise Against Hunger*. Members and friends are invited to help with this Easter Cookie project by making dough, decorating, packing, and selling the cookies. Orders may be given to Amy Dellinger.

### **T.E.A. (Through Eyes of Another) Book Discussion Group**

On March 19th, T.E.A. will meet in the *South Wing lounge* at 7:00 PM to discuss the book, *Horse*, by Geraldine Brooks. Joanne Balliet will lead the discussion. New readers are welcome to join us.

### **Knit, Crochet, & Pray**

*Knit, Crochet, & Pray* will meet Wednesday, March 11th at 1:30 PM in the *South Wing library*. Since we are between charity projects, participants are encouraged to share easy, knit or crochet patterns for small Easter and spring gifts. (It’s always fun to have a little handmade gift to add to an Easter basket.) Those attending are also encouraged to bring along their current projects. We love to see what new items are being created!

Last spring, *Knit, Crochet, & Pray* handed out **Lenten prayer reminder coasters** decorated with applied butterflies. We encourage those who still have theirs to re-use these prayer reminders during Lent. As you enjoy a cup of tea or coffee during your daily devotion time, please include prayers for *U. W. in Faith* mission institutions.



## Thank You!

1. We are most grateful to the many individuals who sent cards, text messages, thoughts, and prayers on the passing of Sherry's father (John Rogers). Especially to those individuals whose willingness and alacrity to help with the meal and the many behind-the-scenes details that were performed are greatly appreciated during this most sorrowful time.

From Sherry Bement and the Rogers family.

2. Thanks to those who helped decorate the church so beautifully over the holidays. Also, for those who helped to take down decorations in January. It takes many hands and we all are gifted in some way to serve the body of Christ!

3. Also, a special thank you to those who participated singing Christmas carols for residents of *Columbia Cottage* and the Greenhouses at *Londonderry Village*. It was truly a special moment seeing many of the residents and staff sing along with us.



## Donate Blood!

**Saturday, March 21st**, *Palmyra First United Methodist Church* is having another blood drive. It will be located in the *Fellowship Hall* from 8:00 AM-4:00 PM. Each donor will receive a \$15 Entrée certificate to *The Texas Roadhouse* in Palmyra as well as 2 tickets to the Comedy Zone in Harrisburg. An appointment is recommended, but not required to donate. Please visit the *Central PA Blood Bank* to schedule for donation at [717giveblood.org](http://717giveblood.org) or call 1-800-771-0059.

## Sew What

### Ham BBQ Follow-Up

Many thanks to all who enjoyed ham BBQs! Thanks to a grant from *Thrivent* to cover supplies. Every dollar collected goes straight to *Rise Against Hunger (November 7, 2026)*. The *Mission Team* is happy to report that \$553 has been deposited and we will continue to work toward raising the \$6048 needed to pack 15,000 plus meals.

Our next *Sew What* event is scheduled for March 8th at 2:00 PM. Recently, we have made many pillow cases for *Pillows of Love*. We are soon going to try making baby bibs to donate to *Lebanon Family Health Services*. Please share your name and contact info on the list in *Fellowship Hall* if you are interested in crafting with *Sew What*. Tasks include tracing a pattern, cutting the fabric, pinning, machine sewing, ironing, and attaching snaps or Velcro.

## Easter Cookies

Once again, *United Women in Faith* will make and decorate Easter sugar cookies! Order forms will be available soon. Orders are due **March 19th**. Cookies will be available for pick up in the *Palmyra First* kitchen **March 28th** from 1:00 PM-2:00 PM and **March 29th** before and after church services.

Help is needed to make dough, decorate, and package the orders. Instructions and cookie recipes are available in the *Fellowship Hall*. Last year, we made just over 1000 cookies so lots of hands are required!!! Please mark your calendar for **March 24th** to decorate and package. Dough may be prepared anytime between **March 10th and 17th**. Sign up sheets are also in the *Fellowship Hall*. *Rise Against Hunger* and the *HUB* will share the proceeds!

## Small Group Studies

### **The Blessed Misfits**

*The Blessed Misfits'* new study is "Final Days" by Matt Rawle and is described by the publisher as follows:

The four New Testament Gospels aren't the same story, but they offer the same Resurrection hope. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John devote most of their stories, detailing Jesus' last week in Jerusalem, all highlighting Jesus' triumphant entry into the city, the suffering and humiliation of the cross, and the empty tomb come Sunday morning, but the stories they tell aren't quite the same.

Each Gospel offers a different lens through which we understand Jesus' Passion. One portrait reveals Jesus to be in control, while another emphasizes his suffering. In one story, Jesus offers hope to the thief on the cross, and in another, Jesus only receives derision. These different perspectives aren't a reason to dismiss the Gospels; rather, they reveal an abundant, diverse, and complementary picture of God's work in the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The *Misfits* is an open study group. The group invites you to join them in the *South Wing*, or via *Zoom* on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM. If you have a study you would like us to consider, please let Pastor Jim know. Consider joining the group as a part of your Lenten discipline.

### **Sunday with the Wired Word**

Is there a place for religion in sports at the Olympic level? That was a recent topic for the Sunday morning study group using *The Wired Word*. Each week, the group can discuss topics taken from the week's news headlines and offers a biblical perspective.

*The Wired Word* meets in the *Fellowship Hall* on Sunday mornings at 10:30 AM. Lessons are emailed to participants on the Thursday before Sunday to give you a chance to think ahead. The material provides background information, links to the relevant stories, and ideas as to how some Christians are reacting.

Feel free to check out the group on any Sunday morning at 10:30 AM. Better yet, let Lee Smedley know you are interested so he can add you to his distribution list, giving you a heads-up on the topic of the week. Because the topic changes each week, this is an ideal study for those who can't commit to a weekly study.



## The Caring Cupboard Visits First Church

On February 8th, we were blessed to have Mr. Dave Fitzkee, Executive Director of *The Caring Cupboard* in Palmyra, speak to us about its beginnings in 2001, its continuing commitment to support individuals and families facing food insecurity in the Palmyra and Annville communities and its 2026 vision to complete a new building in Palmyra offering more services to those in need through its *Beyond Hunger, Building Hope Campaign*. Your offerings to our church's missions giving enabled us to present a \$3,000 donation to *The Caring Cupboard* in support of that campaign.

Because of your donations and support, in 2025, *The Caring Cupboard* was able to provide food through 22,473 pantry visits, serving 1,553 households, and 4,894 unique individuals. You can find additional information about the campaign at this link: [www.caringcupboard.org/beyond-hunger-building-hope](http://www.caringcupboard.org/beyond-hunger-building-hope).

Please note: *The Caring Cupboard's* current mailing address is PO Box 71, Palmyra, PA 17078



## Looking for Londonderry Village Volunteers

*Londonderry Village* is seeking friendly and caring volunteers to spend one-on-one time with their health-care elders, offering companionship, conversation, and a family-like presence. As a friendly visitor, you'll brighten someone's day through sharing stories, playing games, reading, enjoying hobbies, and just bringing a meaningful connection to their lives.

A friendly-visitor training session will be held on Wednesday, April 8th at 1:30 PM in the **Di Matteo Worship Center at Londonderry Village**. Attending this training will give you an opportunity to learn more and decide if this role is a good fit for you.

If you have any questions or are interested in volunteering, contact Trudy Kern, Volunteer Coordinator at 717-838-5406 or at [tkern@londonderryvillage.org](mailto:tkern@londonderryvillage.org).



# Londonderry Village

## Is Pickleball a “Real” Ministry?

In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Paul writes, “<sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.” If our bodies are a temple to God, it seems fitting and appropriate that we should care for our bodies. Pickleball is one way to care for our bodies. At *First Church*, it is an activity that provides physical exercise, fun, and fellowship - all rolled into one! So yes, pickleball is indeed a “**real**” ministry.

If you are intrigued with the sport, but don’t know how to play, Ken and Deb Fuhrman are willing to give you a few lessons. Talk to them or put your name on the signup sheet in the *Fellowship Hall*, and they will let you know when they are giving lessons. If you want to watch a few games before giving it a try, come to the church on Monday or Thursday evening as 7:00 PM or the first Tuesday morning of the month. Players rotate in and out of the games, offering everyone a chance to socialize, support one another, play, and have fun with pickleball.

Pickleball is also a wonderful invitational opportunity. Invite a friend, neighbor, or family to join you on a Monday or Thursday evening.



## Discovery Dunes Sunday School

Discovery Dunes Sunday School was active in February. Children learned about the ministry of Jesus, His teachings, and healings. They made snowflakes, Valentine boxes, and helped fill the Valentine boxes for our “shut-in” seniors. They also learned, “We Three Kings” and “Jesus Loves the Little Children”.

In March, the theme is Gospel-Holy week.

- March 1: Jarius’ Daughter
- March 8: Mary Honors Jesus
- March 15: Bartimaeus Shouts to Jesus
- March 22: Jesus Breaks Bread
- March 29: People Welcome Jesus
- April 5: The Tomb is Empty



We are always in need of staff because we are requiring by law to have two adults with children at all times. If you are willing to be a helper or a teacher, please feel free to try it out.

Grace and peace,

Donna Hassenfritz

**Reminder:** Please have all Newsletter articles handed into the office by the 15th of each month and articles for the Sunday News handed in before noon every Monday.

## Financial Update

Thanks to the faithful financial support of our donors, Palmyra First Church finished 2025 with all our bills paid and a little surplus to use for continuing ministries in 2026. In total, we spent over \$341,700 on the ministries we support. When combined with the expenses of our Noah's Little Ark Christian Preschool, our total spending amounts to almost \$1,000,000!

Because of the generous legacy giving from the Bowman Family provided through their will, our investments with the Mid-Atlantic Foundation were able to finance over \$31,000 in projects ranging from upgrades to the live streaming equipment to capital improvements at the Seltzer Retreat Center. In addition, the funds were tapped, as it is every year, for money to assist in landscape maintenance.

During the season of Lent, the church will again be asking you to consider your spiritual commitment to Christ with your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. Keep your eyes open for your opportunity to make a commitment to the ministry of First Church with your pledge. With your continuing support, the church will continue to have a positive impact on the lives of people as we continue to answer our call to be **"Serving Christ, Changing Lives."**

## Church Directory

We understand that "life happens" and things change during the course of our lifetime. People move, get married, change their phone numbers, etc. We try to keep our directory as updated as possible. Please be sure to notify us of any changes that need to be made to the directory to keep everyone up-to-date on our church happenings. If you would like to be removed/added to the directory, please let Heidi know in the church office at [admin@palmyrafirst.org](mailto:admin@palmyrafirst.org) or call 717-838-2551. If you would like a copy of the directory, we would be happy to email it to you or print a hard copy for you.

## Prayer Requests

Every Sunday, you will receive a *Connect Card* in the bulletin to fill out and add any prayer requests. The prayer requests are for the Sunday prayers. If you would like to be added to the weekly "prayer chain", be sure to check the box on the back "add to prayer chain". Prayers can also be added to the "prayer chain" any day of the week by calling or emailing Karen Lynch at 717-571-5903 or [karen\\_lynch@me.com](mailto:karen_lynch@me.com).

