



From May 19th to 21st, 2026, the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference held its 240th Annual Session. Imagine that, just 10 years after the Declaration of Independence and 2 years after the Methodist Episcopal Church (the oldest of our predecessor denominations) was formed at the Christmas Conference of 1784, the predecessor of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference was formed and has continued to meet every year since then.

One of the highlights of the annual gathering is the clergy session, where the “members in full connection” take a final vote on new clergy members of the conference. For those being ordained as either a Deacon or Elder, this is the culmination of what is, at a minimum, a 9-year process of education and probationary membership. The process follows a familiar pattern for long-term members. Candidates are vetted first by the local church, then the District Committee on Ministry, then the Board of Ordained Ministry, before appearing before the Clergy Session of the Conference.

After dinner on this first night of the conference, we gathered in the main hall for the Celebrating Ministry Service. At this service, three new elders in full connection were ordained, four individuals were commissioned toward Deacons orders, and four more were commissioned toward Elders orders.

The highlight of the second day will be the service of remembrance, where we read the names of the clergy, clergy spouses, lay members, and bishops who have transferred to the Church Triumphant. As each name is read, friends and family are invited to rise to remember those who have gone to the Lord, and the Cokesbury Bell is tolled. We will then celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion with these new saints in glory.

While some think of the Conference as a business meeting, it is really a spiritual experience that all United Methodists are invited to attend. For those of us who have attended for many years, it is a time of renewing friendships, catching up with friends, and a time to gather new ideas for ministry.

Thanks be to God for the proud history embodied in this 240th Session of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church

Grace & Peace,

James D. Anderman, Pastor



As of this writing, the grass is very green, and the leaves have fully emerged on most trees. These are the annual signs indicating spring has arrived. We are in the season of growth. In the church, as of June, we will enter the season of Kingdomtide, which is to be a season of growth. Our parameters turn green to symbolize this growth. The season continues until late November when we enter the Advent season.

The growth should be both for us as a body of believers and for each of us individually. Our growth should be spiritual, educational, and numerical, but for this growth to happen, each of us will have to do our part. Commit yourself to praying for *Palmyra First Church*, her members, our community, and yourself. Pray that we may experience growth in all these areas, then listen for God's voice and guidance for how you can be a part of bringing about growth!

Our worship themes for June and early July are as follows:

June 7th – Second Sunday of Kingdomtide: "Faith to Follow" is what Abram and Sarai had, yet at the end of their earthly life, they had not yet seen all God promised. What can we learn from this faithful couple? We will read their story from both the Old and New Testaments using Genesis 12:1-9 and Romans 4:13-25.

June 14th: "Compassion and Hospitality" is the theme of the day as we continue with the story of Abram and Sarai, whose names are changed to Abraham and Sarah. We will focus on the blessing received through compassion and hospitality by both the giver and receiver. Our readings will be from both Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-2, and Matthew 9:35-10:15.

June 21st – Father's Day: What do you say about a father who kicks his young son out of the house, without a place to go? It sounds horrible, but it happened to Ishmael in Genesis 21:8-21. This Father's Day, we will examine the role fathers should play using the troubling scripture from Genesis, along with Ephesians 6:1-4. Our message is "A Father's Role."

June 28th: In Paul's letter to the Romans (6:12-23), the issues of temptation, sin, and grace are addressed. While Paul's answers seem simple, resisting temptation is difficult. This is where *Celebrate Recovery (CR)* becomes helpful. We are all dealing with life's hurts, habits, and hang-ups. How we deal with them is critical. Our message will be "Who Is In Control?"

July 5th – Independence Weekend: As we celebrate 250 years of freedom and independence from the British Crown, we will celebrate our freedom in Christ through the sacrament of Holy Communion. The prayer of Great Thanksgiving says (in part) "you (Jesus)... delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the spirit." What does this deliverance, this freedom, really mean for us today? Using scriptures from Exodus 12:1-13 and Matthew 26:17-30, we will focus on "True Freedom."



Church Picnic

Palmyra First Church is planning to kick off the summer season with a church-wide picnic on Sunday, June 7th at 12:00 noon. We will all have a chance to mix and mingle. Everyone is asked to bring a covered dish for sides and deserts with the church supplying hamburgers and hot dogs. There is sign-up sheets in *Fellowship Hall* for food and volunteers to help.



Dinner and a Movie Thanks!

Thanks to everyone who helped with the set-up, clean-up, and food prep at the dinner and a movie event in May! The food was delicious, the service was great, and the movie was very touching and entertaining! We had a huge turn-out and are looking forward to it again in fall!

HUB News

We will not be having a *HUB Packing Event* in June, however, our next *HUB Packing Event* is scheduled for **Tuesday, July 21st at 6:30 PM** in the *Fellowship Hall*.

For the month of June, we are specifically needing kitchen gloves (durable, for multi-use). You can find a list of all items needed to pack the buckets and hygiene kits in the *Fellowship Hall*.

Changes to Email Notifications

To everyone receiving the newsletter or other notifications through email: We will be using a new platform for sending out email notifications from *Palmyra First Church*. If you would like to receive email notifications for our weekly news, monthly newsletters, or special events, visit our website at www.palmyrafirst.org, scroll to the bottom of the homepage, and click on any of the subscribe options.

Deadlines for Palmyra First

Anyone interested in posting news or up-coming events in the *Palmyra First United Methodist Church* Newsletter, Bulletin, or Sunday news, must turn them in before the deadlines.

The deadline for the weekly Bulletin and/or Sunday News is 12:00 noon on Monday before the next church service. The deadline for the monthly newsletter is the 15th of each month before the newsletter is scheduled to print.

Please call the office at 717-838-2551 or email Heidi at admin@palmyrafirst.org to have an announcement or event posted.

Live-Casts of Worship

As you likely know, *Palmyra First Church* live-casts our services on our website and *YouTube*. We can always use new people to learn the equipment, so we have folks available to operate the camera, the sound system, and the projection of words on the screen. We also need volunteers to monitor the comments sections so prayer requests can be relayed to the pastor.

Our existing volunteers will be happy to show you the ropes and explain the procedures, so consider joining the crew in the balcony and take the word of God to the world at large. We need help not only on Sunday morning, but for the occasional night services as well as funerals when live-casting is requested.

Small Group Studies

The Blessed Misfits

The Blessed Misfits is our Wednesday night study group. The group will begin a new study on May 27th with an introductory session and in earnest on June 3rd, depending on the availability of the study material. Now is an ideal time to consider your spiritual growth by being a part of the Misfits.

The group gathers each Wednesday evening at 6:30 PM in the *South Wing* and via Zoom, giving everyone an option. If you would like to give the group a try, let Pastor Jim know so he can secure a book for you. If you want to join via Zoom, please provide an email address so we can send you the link.

Sunday with the Wired Word

What should a Christian think about the news of the day? *The Wired Word* discusses the news from a biblical perspective. The group meets in *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.

Annual Conference

Did you know that our *Eastern Pennsylvania Conference* was formed just 10 years after the nation declared our independence? Well, it's true. As this newsletter is being prepared, Pastor Jim and Bill Hassenfritz are preparing to attend the 240th Session of the *Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church*. The conference will again be held in Wildwood, New Jersey, at the *Convention Center*.

You might ask, "Why does the *Eastern Pennsylvania Conference* meet in New Jersey?" The answer is simple – MONEY! Believe it or not, going to Wildwood is less expensive than any venue we have found in Pennsylvania, including the *Expo Center* in Oaks, PA.

The Wildwood Convention Center is a well-oiled machine. The staff is used to hosting conferences and conventions and doing superb jobs with the accommodations, meals, and all the other services needed for the conference.

We save money for several reasons:

We share the setup costs with the *Greater New Jersey Conference*.

The facility is less expensive than other venues.

May is still "off season" for the Jersey Shore, saving money on hotels.

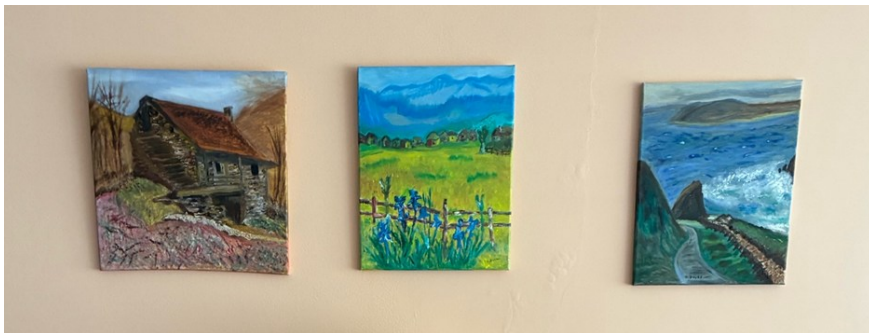
One of the things that will happen at the conference is the election of members of various boards and agencies of the conference. The candidates include our own Tim Yingst, who will join the *EPA Loan Fund Board of Directors*, and Pastor Jim, who will continue service on the *Loan Fund* and the *Commission on Conference Sessions*.

Check out next month's *Tower Tidings* for a full report of the Conference.



Visit Our New Art Gallery!

The lounge in the *South Wing*, near the mail and cash deposit boxes, recently received a beautiful update. Now often called the “Parlor,” it is an inviting space for small meetings and fellowship groups. Thanks to Bob Douds, it also now serves as an art gallery. Bob, a member the *Hershey Area Art Association* and a member of *First Church Trustees*, generously offered to display some of his original paintings there. Having taken up painting a few years ago, he has created artwork inspired by famous places and natural wonders he has visited. He regularly rotates pieces from his home collection for display in the gallery.



Managing Our Physical Resources

As busy as our church facilities have become, it is critical that everyone check with Heidi when you want to use a room or equipment. She is the official “keeper of the calendar” for all things related to building usage. Remember our public calendar does not list everything going on at *Palmyra First*. It leaves out events that are not open to the public and it does not include the preparation time, which is often reserved for a special event. These times are listed on a separate “Facilities Usage” calendar that is not published. Be sure to fill out the proper forms when reserving church facilities, whether it’s for a church activity or a private or personal event. There are no forms or fees associated with funerals, however, we still need to verify that the sanctuary or *Fellowship Hall* is available.

Heidi, as the keeper of the calendar is the person to ask to reserve both a room and church equipment such as projectors, tables, chairs, etc. She also schedules the Zoom Account. Don’t assume she understands your needs. She may have never seen your ministry action and may have no clue what you need. So don’t be disappointed when you arrive at an event and discover what you need is already reserved for another group. Ask first! Contact the office at 717-838-2551.

Property Maintenance

We have a dedicated group of individuals who help maintain both the Birch and Green Street campus and the *Seltzer Retreat Center*. With the warm weather upon us, we are back to cutting the grass at both facilities, raking gardens and leaves, picking up fallen tree limbs, pulling weeds, watering flowers, and a variety of other tasks.

If you would like to help, talk to Tim Yingst. Our grass cutters rotate responsibilities and generally cut the lawn every 6 weeks. If you have never driven a Zero-Turn Mower, Tim will be happy to provide some instruction and practice time. The grass at *Seltzer* is cut with a conventional lawn tractor.

Inside the building, we need help keeping the kitchen equipment clean and spotless, making minor repairs, changing lightbulbs, and so many other things. There are also a few painting projects we'd like to accomplish.

There is a maintenance opportunity for everyone.

Discovery Dunes

Thank you to Donna Hassenfritz for many years of service at *Palmyra First* as Director of our Sunday School Worship, *Discovery Dunes*. She has decided to step down and we are currently in need of someone to fill her shoes. If you are interested in volunteering for the position, please contact Pastor Jim or Tim Yingst

Altar Flowers

Anyone wishing to order Altar Flowers for Sunday Service may fill out an order form located at the Welcome Desk or in the church office. Be sure to note whom you would like to honor or remember. Please hand them in at least 2 weeks before the scheduled service. Orders include 2 arrangements and may be taken with you after the 2nd service. The cost is \$40 and checks can be made payable to *Palmyra First UMC* and mark the check as *Altar Flowers*. Special flower orders may cost more.

If you have a standing order for altar flowers and would like to change or cancel your order, please let Heidi know in the church office at 717-838-2551.

A Note from Carolyn Fisher

“Dear Palmyra First UMC friends,

Many thanks for all the ways you have cared for Millard and me over the years, and especially during the last several months as his health declined. He appreciated every opportunity to preach, lead a class, or read scriptures. We've been encouraged by your kind words and prayers.”

Grace and peace,

Carolyn Fisher

