

Tower Tidings

January 2026

Palmyra First United Methodist Church



Brian Wren wrote the beautiful words of the hymn found on page 383 of our hymnal:

*"This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember and move on,
time to believe what love is bringing, laying to rest the pain that's gone.*

*For by the life and death of Jesus, God's mighty Spirit now as then,
can make for us a world of difference, as faith and hope are born again."*

January 1st is indeed for many a day of new beginnings, and faith and hope are born again. New Year's Day brings New Year's resolutions, promises to ourselves and God that we will live better, more spiritual lives. Our resolutions may include spending more time with family, staying in better physical shape, or doing better with our finances. All these are noble goals, but without a plan for improvement that we implement, the goals will be elusive at best. So, let's start the year off right by making a few changes in our lives.

The church offers a variety of things that may help you. If you are struggling with hurts, habits, and hang-ups, consider participating in *Celebrate Recovery* on Friday evenings. If you want to engage in intentional daily devotions, pick up a copy of *The Upper Room* – and use it daily! If you want to engage in thought-provoking conversations about issues of faith, consider joining the Sunday morning *Wired Word* class or joining the Wednesday evening *Blessed Misfits*. If you need to be more physically active, stop by the church at 7:00 PM on Mondays and Thursdays and play a bit of pickleball.

Expecting improvements without some effort on our part is just silly. Join me in spending a bit of time engaged in self-examination. Ask yourself, "What do I need to improve?" and "What do I need to do to make those improvements?" Then make the commitment to **do it!**

Our January 4th service will be focused on renewing our covenant with God, but without work on our part, it will simply be empty words. Don't let that happen. Join me in creating and implementing a plan for a brighter future for yourself, your family, our church, our communities, and our nation. With God's help, and our efforts, 2026 will be a fantastic year, with blessings from the Lord. Let's be intentional about the changes we need to make so we are best equipped to fulfill our mission of **"Serving Christ, Changing Lives."**

May your 2026 be filled with blessings from on high!

Grace & Peace,

James D. Anderman, Pastor



The preacher said,
"Two reasons to smile: Jesus
loves you, and coffee is free."

January is full of transitions: transitions to a new year, from the 12th Day of Christmas to Epiphany, to the season after Epiphany, and there are several special Sundays thrown in along the way. The most complicated Sunday is January 4th as it is the Second Sunday of Christmas, the first Sunday of 2026, and could be celebrated as Epiphany Sunday! We will use this Sunday as an occasion to renew our covenant with God at the start of a new year.

Our liturgical colors will be white for the first two Sundays and then green for the “ordinary time” of the season after Epiphany.

Our worship themes for each Sunday in January and early February are as follows:

January 4th – The Second Sunday of Christmas: At the beginning of a new year, it is fitting and appropriate for us to renew our covenant with God. This year, we will again use the Wesleyan Covenant service, featuring the covenant prayer and our promises to live godly lives. Our message will be based on Isaiah 60:1-6 and Matthew 25:31-46 and will be titled “Choose Rightly or Be Left.” This will also be our first opportunity for communion in 2026.

January 11th – Baptism of the Lord Sunday: This week, we will be reading from Isaiah 42:1-9 and Matthew 3:13-17 as we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord Sunday. We will be examining the covenant relationship between God and ourselves and the task we have been assigned by God to serve others. The message is titled “A Covenant for the People.”

January 18th: “New Life in Christ” is something we often refer to, but what does it mean? This week, we will read from Isaiah 49:1-7 and John 1:29-42 as we look for answers and recommit ourselves to following Jesus.

January 25th: This week, we will be joined by David Fitzkee, Executive Director of the *Caring Cupboard*. The *Caring Cupboard* is one of the local organizations our *Missions Team* has chosen for financial support. Our message will be based on Psalm 15 and Matthew 5:1-12 and will help us understand we are “Blessed to Be a Blessing.”

February 1st: “Why?” Why would God pay such a high price to save people who have, over and over again, turned their backs on their creator? This week, we will read from John 1:1-18 and Ephesians 1:3-14 as we seek to understand God’s Grace, and the reason “the Word became flesh and lived among us.” (John 1:14)

February 8th: “Are You Salty?” No, not that kind of salty! The good kind of salty. This week, we will examine the word of God spoken through the prophet Isaiah (55:1-12) and the words of Jesus recorded by Matthew (5:13-20). Our message will encourage us to be the right kind of salty.



Small Group Studies

The Blessed Misfits

After a bit of a break the *Blessed Misfits* will resume our weekly gatherings on Wednesday, January 7th. We will be starting a newly updated book by Max Locado titled “John 3:16, The Numbers of Hope.” This book will help us focus on, understand, and believe the promise Jesus made that “whoever believes in him shall have everlasting life.” This should be an interesting topic with the power to make us think and strengthen our faith and belief.

The *Misfits* invite you to join us in the *South Wing*, or via *Zoom*, on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM. Consider joining the group as a new spiritual discipline for 2026.

Sunday with the Wired Word

With all the bad news we hear daily, how should we, as Christians, react? *The Wired Word*, our Sunday morning study group, is based on this basic idea. Lessons, based on recent headline stories, are emailed to participants on Thursday. The material provides background information, links to the relevant stories, and some 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. Give him your email address and he will add you to his distribution list, so you have a heads-

Social and Physical Exercise Opportunities

What do you do to keep in shape physically, socially, and mentally? Are you curious about pickleball, but don't know how to play? If you would like to learn the game, Ken and Deb Fuhrman are willing to give you a few lessons. Put your name on the signup sheet in *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 at 7:00 PM or the first Tuesday morning of the month. Players rotate in and out, offering everyone a chance to socialize, support one another, and play pickleball.

Baby Shower for Jesus

United Women in Faith will hold our annual Baby Shower for Jesus on **Saturday, January 24th beginning at 9:30 AM** in the *Fellowship Hall*. All interested women are invited to join us for breakfast and fellowship. There is no cost, but we do encourage you to sign up to attend so we will know how many to plan for. The sign-up sheet is on the table in the *Fellowship Hall*.

We are also collecting items for *Lebanon Family Health Services* in the cradle in the *Narthex*. These include baby blankets, bibs, booties, diapers, and other baby items, as well as hats, scarves, mittens, and gloves for all ages.



The HUB in 2025

2025 was the first full year where we have housed a HUB for Mission Central. It has been a busy year with over 40 different volunteers, most from our church, but some volunteers from outside the church. We have received many donations for the buckets and cleaning kits as well as some monetary donations. All of these resources will help families who are experiencing natural disasters as they begin their cleanup.

This year, the *Palmyra First Church HUB* donated 447 hygiene kits, 204 cleaning buckets, several bags of personal toiletries, some medical supplies, two computers, and a bag of school supplies. In addition, we presented a \$500 check to *Mission Central*.

We have had some very generous donations from church members and have been blessed to receive lots of buckets from *Weis Markets* bakery. Without the support of many members at *First Church*, we would not have been able to accomplish so much. We hope to make an even greater impact in 2026, but want to be cautious not to overburden our church members. We are going to try packing every other month during the new year to ease some of the supply issues. Another goal for the year is to try and involve other churches and community organizations for greater impact. If you have any contacts with other churches or groups who might be interested in this project, please let one of us know.

There are several other ministries that occur at *Mission Central*, and we will be trying to focus on some of those as well. One active ministry is a shoe collection. Shoes in good, used condition are collected for those in need. In February, we will do a shoe collection. So, as you are cleaning out your closets in the new year, please consider donating any good used shoes.

Thanks so much for your support of this project!

Karen Douds and Amy Dellinger



Men's Breakfast

Saturday, January 17th, *Palmyra First United Methodist Church* will be having another Men's Breakfast at the *Seltzer Retreat Center*, located at 183 Lindbergh Dr, Palmyra. The meal will be served at 8:00 AM. For more info, contact Tim Yingst at 717-926-8777.

Noah's Little Ark Preschool News

December was filled with excitement. So much fun celebrating the birth of Jesus and embracing holiday traditions. The Christmas Pageant was once again a hit filling our hearts with the true meaning of Christmas and joy that can only come from children. Their enthusiasm was contagious evening when we were all feeling hectic for the holidays. Kudos to our dedicated and amazing staff that make this all look easy.

January brings a change to our office as Martha Pierce steps back from her role as office administrator. Tracie Witmer, who has been with us for 6 years, has been hired to take over. We are thankful that Martha will stay with us through the rest of the school year for music. All the best to both!

Blessings for 2026!