

Palmyra First UMC

Tower Tidings

April 2026



April begins partway through Holy Week, and April 2nd is Holy Thursday (or Maundy Thursday if you prefer), which we recognize as the day Jesus instituted Holy Communion as a sacrament. While you may receive the sacrament monthly, have you thought about its full meaning?

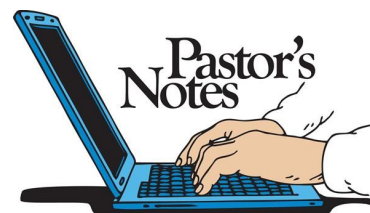
This month, I want to focus on the meaning behind “Communion.” This may help us further understand the sacrament itself. Outside of the context of the sacrament, communion means an act of sharing. In the sacrament, we are reminded how Jesus shared himself with us by sacrificing his life to pay the price for our sins. On the night he was betrayed (Holy Thursday) Jesus shared the Passover meal with all the disciples, including Judas, who would betray him, Peter, who would deny him, and all the others who would abandon him. At the end of the meal, Jesus used the common elements of the meal to represent his body and blood and created the sacrament of Holy Communion. It was a very intimate act of sharing with the disciples, which, in the moment, they did not fully understand.

Communion remains an intimate act of sharing; God sharing with the church and those present sharing with each other. Jesus loved all the disciples enough to include each one of them. In other settings, we recognize Jesus welcomed children, made them feel loved and included. So, in Methodist tradition and understanding, the sacrament is offered to everyone who accepts the invitation, which comes from Christ. It doesn’t matter what church a person belongs to or doesn’t belong to, it doesn’t matter how old they are. Even the youngest among us understands both sharing and being included or excluded. Our God is an inclusive God!

We even serve people who haven’t previously believed. This is based on the Road to Emmaus story found in Luke 24:13-35, where Cleopas and the companion’s “eyes were opened in the breaking of the bread.” They became believers as Jesus shared a meal and broke the bread, as he had just a few days earlier with his disciples.

As Methodists, we believe Communion still has the power to transform lives. It helps us remember what Jesus willingly did for us. The sacrament invites us into a shared relationship with God, a relationship where we will be “**Serving Christ, Changing Lives.**”

Grace & Peace,



James D. Anderman, Pastor

April 1, 1956, was a memorable day in the history of *Palmyra First Church*. It was Easter Sunday and an appropriate day to dedicate our newly built sanctuary to the glory of God. This year, April 1st, is the Wednesday of Holy Week, making April 2nd Holy Thursday and April 3rd Good Friday. Easter will be Sunday, April 5th.

As previously announced, we will celebrate Holy Thursday at Campbelltown and Good Friday at Gravel Hill. Both services will begin at 7:00 PM. Our “SonRise” service will be at Seltzer Retreat Center and will begin at 6:30 AM. Hopefully, you will be able to make all these special services.

Our worship themes for April and early May are as follows:

April 2nd – 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 3rd – 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 reinforce 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 5th – 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 5th – 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 had 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. Our readings will be from Acts 10:34-43 and Matthew 28:1-10. Our message is titled “Practicing Righteousness.”

April 12th – Second Sunday of Easter: The first Sunday after Easter is sometimes referred to as Holy Humor Sunday, which plays off the “prank” God pulled on Satan with the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Our message will be delivered by Mike Poltonavage, while Pastor Jim will be at Bethany UMC. The service will focus on Jonah, who is referred to in Matthew 12:40, as well as his the story of Jonah in the book that bears his name.

April 19th – Third Sunday of Easter: Christ’s death on the cross paid the price for our forgiveness, but what happens when we are unforgiving? In John 20:19-31, Jesus tells the disciples if they forgive sins, they are forgiven, but what happens if we do not forgive? Based on the John passage, our message will be “Retained Sins.”



April 26th – Fourth Sunday of Easter: Stephen is the first martyr of the Christian Church. His story is told in Acts 6:1-8:1a. While we will not read the whole story, you are encouraged to read the story to understand the full context of his life in Christ. Stephen exemplifies what Jesus said in John 14:1-7, 25-27, his heart was not troubled but peaceful. Our message “Peaceful Hearts” will be based on selections from Acts and John.

May 3rd - Fifth Sunday of Easter: How was Jesus made known to you? This week, we read about two people who came to know Jesus because of an act of kindness and a shared meal. Our message, based on Luke 24:13-35, will be titled “Communion with God.”

Small Group Studies

The Blessed Misfits

The Blessed Misfits is in the middle of our study of “Final Days” by Matt Rawle and will be ready to start a new book on April 15th. Everyone is welcome to join us for the next study. If you have a topic you would like to see addressed, let Pastor Jim know so it can be considered.

The group meets in the *South Wing* and via *Zoom* on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM. If you want to join by *Zoom*, please let us know 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.

Is Pickleball a “Real” Ministry?

In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Paul writes, “¹⁹ 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; ²⁰ 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 *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 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 member to join you on a Monday or Thursday evening.



United Women in Faith Meeting

The next quarterly Zoom planning meeting for *United Women in Faith* will be **Thursday, April 9th at 7:00 PM**. All of our participants are invited to attend. Check your email for the Zoom code a few days before the meeting.

Knit, Crochet, & Pray

On Wednesday, April 8th at 1:30 PM, *Knit, Crochet, & Pray* will meet in the *south wing library*. In addition to offering a prayer of blessing over homemade items to be donated to community agencies, we will discuss future charity projects. Contact Sally Smedley if you have questions about *Knit, Crochet, & Pray* at slsmedley622@gmail.com.

United Women in Faith's

Annual Lenten Call to Prayer and Self-Denial

Hopefully, many of you included *United Women in Faith* agencies in your daily prayer times this past month. There are still a few brochures on the welcome desk describing some of the hands-on outreach efforts of *United Women in Faith* (it can't hurt to keep on praying)! The focus of *Call to Prayer* and donations this year will support the 87, *United Women in Faith*-sponsored outreach agencies in the US.

Thank You!

Sincere thanks go out to everyone who helped with the March 8th, *Sew What* project of making baby bibs for *Lebanon Family Health Services* and pillow cases for *Pillows of Love*. The time spent together was both enjoyable and productive (and included a couple of new folks with sewing machines). The beautiful items created all will be delivered to children and adults in need in our area. Contact Karen Douds if you have questions about *Sew What* at douds2@comcast.net.

Also thanks to everyone who helped with our Easter Cookie Project, which includes the dough makers, decorators, wrappers, sellers and buyers. It's a fun project, and even better, it benefits worthwhile groups like *Rise Against Hunger* and *HUB* disaster supplies. Special thanks to Lori Kelly who leads this project, and with the help of Mom, Karen, does most of our prep work.

Election Day Bake Sale

Mark your calendars for **Tuesday, May 19th**. We're having the *United Women in Faith's* Primary Election Day Bake Sale. Sign-up sheets will be in *Fellowship Hall* for those who are planning to bake, help set up Monday night, and/or be at the sales table for a couple of hours on Tuesday. Remember, for health and safety concerns, items should be pre-wrapped. Questions about *United Women in Faith*? Contact Sally Smedley slsmedley622@gmail.com

(Through Eyes of Another)

T.E.A. Book Group

Our **April 16th** reading selection is *Brother I'm Dying* by Edwidge Danticat. Our discussion leader is Barb Spear for that Thursday gathering. *Brother I'm Dying* is an award-winning, true-life epic on an intimate scale: a deeply affecting story of home and family of two men's lives and deaths, and of a daughter's great love for them both.

T.E.A. will meet at **7:00 PM** in the *South Wing Lounge*. Contact Amy Dellinger if you have any questions at amy.dellinger22@gmail.com.



West District United Women in Faith Spring Ingathering at

Lancaster First UMC in Lancaster

As a follow-up to the information we heard at the Fall Celebration about those incarcerated, the *West District United Women in Faith* is planning a session on **Saturday, April 18th** on how to support those coming out of prison, and has requested women's travel size toiletries, which will be distributed to them. A complete list of requested items is available in the Fellowship Hall. Items are due by **April 12th**. There will be a sign-up sheet for those interested in attending Spring Ingathering.

Let's Have a Church Picnic!

Do you want to get to gather with your fellow church members for some yard games? Or get to know your fellow congregants in a relaxed setting? If so, please join the vision team for our covered dish picnic on **Sunday, June 7th**, starting at **12:00 PM**. Please be on the lookout for additional information in the coming months. We hope to see you there!

Discovery Dunes

Spring has arrived! The signs are everywhere! The birds are singing, flowers are blooming, and people are outside greeting neighbors again. All of nature is hopeful!

In March, the children learned about the miracles of Jesus; the healing of Jarius's daughter, Bartimaeus regains his sight, the Last Supper, and Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. They played games and solved puzzles.

In April, *Discovery Dunes* will learn about the following:

April 4-The Tomb is Empty

April 11-Paul Changes

April 18-Paul Escapes

April 25-The Church Grows

Enjoy the signs of spring!

Grace to you,

Donna Hassenfritz



Blood Drive Update

Thanks to everyone that donated during our blood drive in March. We registered 117 people and collected 96 units of blood. This drive will save up to 288 lives!

Our next drive at Palmyra First will be on **Saturday, May 30th from 8:00 AM-4:00 PM**.

Noah's Little Ark

Happy Easter! The children and staff are ready for warmer temperatures and more opportunities to get outside. We have enjoyed inviting community organizations in to share resources with parents and had the opportunity to share with PFUMC missions.

It was a wonderful way to connect. Judy and Phil D. shared a bible lesson with our students during chapel and it was a big hit. We look forward to having more chapel guest stars in the months to come.

April is our annual Art Show, Auction, and Bake Sale. This is open to the public on Tuesday and Thursday, April 14th and 16th from 6:00 PM-7:30 PM and Saturday, April 18th from 10:00 AM-11:30 AM. Feel free to come out and see all the hard work our teachers dedicate to our students. NLA is truly blessed!

Palmyra First United Methodist Church Supports Lancaster Lebanon Habitat for Humanity

Palmyra, PA — March 16, 2026 — *Palmyra First UMC* helped families across Lancaster and Lebanon Counties open doors to brighter futures through a \$4,000 gift that will have an impact on our community immediately.

Tiffany Franck, right, Director of Development for the *Lancaster Lebanon Habitat for Humanity*, thanked the church for its gift and shared that *Habitat* is currently engaged in three home renovation projects in the City of Lebanon and a 5-home build in Columbia Borough, and is preparing for an 8-home build in Lancaster City in 2026. She said, “your help provides critical funding to our construction efforts and also opens doors to opportunities for team-building activities through group volunteer days.”



First Church Pastor Jim Anderman also thanked the church congregation and said, “your gifts towards this mission outreach supports the life changing work *Habitat* does and shows what *Palmyra First Church* does to continue our mission of “Serving Christ, Changing Lives.”



Pastor Jim Anderman, left, and Amy Dellinger, right, present the Palmyra First United Methodist gift of \$4,000 to Tiffany Franck, Lancaster Lebanon Habitat for Humanity, supporting local families and community development.