



Sometimes changes are slow and incremental with changes going unnoticed for years. But, as we reflect, we can see change is always happening. As we reflect on the past, remember things will never be the way they were, but they never were the way we remember anyway! And in reality, some things are better than they used to be.

As I begin my eighth year of ministry at *Palmyra First*, I want to look back at some of the milestones and changes so we can celebrate our improvements and accomplishments.

I began my time here on July 1, 2019, giving me a bit of time to get to know some of the congregation before the dreaded Covid reared its ugly head. But that turned into a blessing. On the Sunday before we were told to stop in person worship, Jake Butch pulled out his cell phone, and we began live casting our services. Since then, we have upgraded from a phone, to a camera, to the current camera operated by a joystick from the balcony. Along the way, we have upgraded our internet capability, sound system, and projection equipment. Our most recent upgrade is the electronic announcement screen in the narthex. It lets everyone, visitors and regulars alike, know what is happening around the church and community.

We also improved safety by upgrading our fire alarm system and replacing our main boiler. As a side benefit, we are burning oil more efficiently.

In ministry, our missions team formed a partnership with *Mission Central*. Our production of cleaning (flood) buckets and hygiene kits allows the *United Methodist Committee on Relief* to be ready for emergencies. The group supports several local missions with both money and other hands-on opportunities to serve our neighbors in need.

Our *Noah's Little Ark Christian Preschool* is more integrated into the life of the church than ever before. We now have volunteers enhancing the work of the school and making connections between the kids and our membership. At present, we are sharing our financial staff to make things run more smoothly. The school is currently working toward meeting new standards to be certified by the Commonwealth.

These are just a few of the things we do to be **"Serving Christ Changing Lives."** Next month, I'll focus on the many learning opportunities we offer adults.

Grace & Peace,

James D. Anderman, Pastor



When July arrives, we are fully into the summer season. The pace of life changes with vacation plans, gardening tasks, and bit of a break from the normal routines of autumn, winter and spring. At the church some committees don't meet as often, attendance changes with visitors arriving and regulars spend time away.

But there is one thing that will be constant. We are in the season of Kingdomtide, a season for growth, symbolized by the green altar cloths, and hopefully growth in your spiritual life and a growing sense of faith within the community we serve. Are you willing to do your part?

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

**July 5<sup>th</sup> – 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.”

**July 12<sup>th</sup> – Seventh Sunday of Kingdomtide:** “What is Most Important?” is the question we will address this Sunday as we read more of the story of the descendants of Abraham and Sarah along with Jesus’ words to his followers in Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23. As you prepare for worship this week, consider what is most important in your life. What would it take for you to give it up?

**July 19<sup>th</sup> – Eighth Sunday of Kingdomtide:** Our actions have “Consequences.” At times the consequences happen immediately, at other times it may take a while, but there will be “Consequences.” This week, we will be reading from Genesis 28:10-19a and Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 as we look to the scriptures to guide our lives and actions.

**July 26<sup>th</sup> – Ninth Sunday of Kingdomtide:** What are you willing to do to achieve your goals? In the reading for this Sunday, we learn what Jacob was willing to do to marry the woman he loved (Genesis 29:15-28) and we see what others are willing to do to achieve their life’s ambition. “What Do You Want from Life,” and what are you willing to do to achieve the goal?

**August 2<sup>nd</sup> – Tenth Sunday of Kingdomtide:** As Jacob left his father-in-law and headed back to the place of his birth, he wrestled with God and was forever changed. The disciples were challenged by Jesus to do the impossible; they too were forever changed. What is God calling you to do, which has the potential to forever change you? Our message is titled “Wrestling with God” and will draw on Genesis 32:22-31 and Matthew 14:13-21.



## Ronald McDonald House

*Palmyra First* will provide and prepare a meal on Monday, July 13th for the guests of *Ronald McDonald House* in Hershey. The *House* provides lodging and an evening meal for families with a child receiving treatment at the *Hershey Medical Center* at no cost to the family. Families must live at least 30 minutes away and many of the guests are from other countries and across the United States. This allows families to focus on their child and not the basic needs of day to day living. Six volunteers are needed from 3:00 PM until about 5:00 PM. The sign up sheet is on the welcome table in the *Fellowship Hall*.

## Palmyra Library Book Sale

The *Palmyra Public Library* is having their annual book sale in the *Fellowship Hall* at *Palmyra First* in July.

The dates and times are as follows:

Saturday, July 11th - 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Monday - Wednesday, July 13th-15th - 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Thursday, July 16th - 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

## Men's Breakfast

On **Saturday, July 18th**, *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.

## HUB News

Our next HUB packing event is on **Tuesday, July 21st at 6:30 PM** in the *Fellowship Hall* at *Palmyra First UMC*.

For the month of July, we are specifically heavy-duty trash bags (33-45 gallon). You can find a list of all items needed to pack the buckets and hygiene kits in the *Fellowship Hall*.

## 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.

## New Monitor!

*Palmyra First* has a new monitor in the Narthex, behind the welcome desk. It's full of information and happenings here at the church and in the community. Check it out!



## Discovery Dunes July 2026

Everybody who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise builder who built a house on bedrock. (Matthew 7:24). A good reminder that we should have a firm foundation!

In July, we will be learning about some of the parables of Jesus.

The following are the lessons in July:

July 5	The Two Houses	Matthew 7:24-27
July 12	The Two Debtors	Luke 7:41-43
July 19	The Mustard Seed and the Yeast	Luke 13:18-21
July 26	The Pharisee and the Tax Collector	Luke 18:9-14

Sincerely,

Discovery Dunes Staff



## Small Group Studies

### **The Blessed Misfits**

*The Blessed Misfits*, our Wednesday night study group, will continue to meet throughout the summer reading a variety of books and discussing them each week. The group will start a new study in July making this an ideal time to join the group.

The meeting time is 6:30 PM in the *South Wing*. The group also offers a Zoom option, which is accessible through either a computer or smart phone so you can be away and still be part of the discussion. 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 the Sunday meetings 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 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.

## Help Wanted!

*Palmyra First Church* is currently looking for an organist/ accompanist and a choir director. Please spread the word and if you know anyone interested, please have them contact Pastor Jim at 717-473-0042 or at [pastorjim@palmyrafirst.org](mailto:pastorjim@palmyrafirst.org).



## Church Picnic

*Palmyra First Church* kicked off the summer season with a Church wide picnic on the first Sunday in June. Thanks to everyone who cooked, baked, prepared, donated their time and food, and helped set-up for the church picnic last Sunday. The weather was wonderful and we all had a great time eating the food, spending time with our church family and friends, and playing games in the yard! With all the fun we had, the *Vision Team* is planning to make this an annual event. Next year, the date is June 6th.



## Looking Ahead

The third window in the sanctuary, from the back on the street side of the building, features an image of St. Francis of Assisi. He is often thought of as the patron saint of animals. The Feast Day of St. Francis is October 4, the date he left earthly life behind for a place in heaven. In honor of his legacy, *Palmyra First Church* will again host a “Blessing of the Animals” on the first Saturday of October, which is October 3.

We would like to have a few animal-related service providers and vendors on hand to enhance the day. If you know of someone involved with animals, ask them if they would like to participate. Ask your vet, pet groomer, or pet shop. Ask crafty people who would like to display their handiwork.

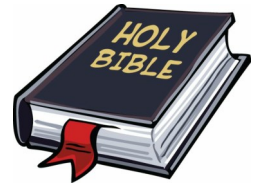
In the past, this has been a successful outreach. Let’s make the 2026 Blessing of the Animals the best yet. Contact Pastor Jim or Heidi in the office if you have any questions or would like to help.

## New Pew Bibles

The Church Council members have noticed the condition of our existing pew Bibles and would like to replace them with new and updated Bibles. The current edition used is the New Revised Standard Version, which was completed in 1989. We would like to switch to the newer Common English Bible, which was finished in 2011. The new translation is faithful to the original Hebrew and Greek texts but is easier to understand.

We are still researching the purchase to find the best value. We are looking for a quality which will stand up to repeated use over a number of years, has a large enough print to be easily read, and fits into the pew racks. We are estimating the cost will be about \$25 per copy.

If you would like to dedicate one or more of the new Bibles in honor or memory of a loved one, please let Pastor Jim know.



## Scholarships for Seminary Education

Within the United States, our denomination operates 13 different seminaries for the theological education of candidates for ministry within the church. In addition, a number of other schools are approved by the University Senate of the United Methodist. There are also seminaries outside the US for our United Methodist candidates living and wanting to serve in Europe, Africa, and the Philippines.

For American students, there is a long history of supporting seminary education with scholarships, many of which come from endowed funds. These scholarships make the education of our pastors possible. Unfortunately, the same is not true for our international students, yet the needs are just as great or even greater.

In order to address the problem, United Methodists are joining together to create a new Endowment for Theological Education. This fund will help 500 additional students in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines with theological education rooted in the Wesleyan tradition as they faithfully serve the Church.

Throughout the connection, many churches are hosting a “Miracle Sunday” offering to support the creation of the endowment. *Palmyra First* will lend its support with our own version of “Miracle Sunday” on August 1st. You can support the effort with a special gift marked “Miracle Sunday.” Checks should be payable to the *Palmyra First UMC* and can be mailed or dropped in the offering plate.