



Saint Paul United Methodist Church
1320 Fernwood-Glendale Road
Spartanburg, SC 29307

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Spartanburg, SC
Permit No. 33

e-mail churchsecretary@stpumc.org

The Epistle

www.stpumc.org web

voice (864) 582-4040
Sunday Service at 10:00 A.M.

News For The Weeks Of
February 6, 13, 20 & 27, 2023

(864) 583-0850 fax

Return Services Requested



Altrusa International 26th Annual Souper Bowl Chili Sale -

February 10, 12:00-2:00 PM (take-out only)

from Mobile Meals Headquarters, 419 E. Main Street.

\$10 per order includes delicious Chili OR Vegetable Soup, Cornbread and Dessert.

You may also purchase 1/2 gallon containers of either (advance order required).

Text or call 864-415-6485 or email gailhack1@charter.net by February 6 to do so.

Chili: (1) container-\$30, (2) containers for \$50

Vegetable Soup: (1) container-\$20, (2) containers for \$35



The Pastor's Pen:

Friends, I know this is an anxious time in our denomination. I want to keep you informed about what is happening. In the latter half of December, news was released that the Board of Trustees, at the direction of the Bishop, had come up with a plan for those wishing to disaffiliate with our denomination. This plan calls for a church to engage in a time of discernment before any action is taken. It also has certain financial stipulations. You can read more about it here: <https://www.umcsc.org/discern/>. This plan has no termination date and would be available to any church going forward. I will be sharing details of the plan with our Board of Stewards.

While others are rushing, I am encouraging us to be deliberate. One reason is that the Global Methodist Church has not yet been organized through its convening General Conference. Not long ago, I submitted a letter to the editor of The Advocate, the newspaper for SC Methodism. It read:

This is NOT a letter for or against changing our Disciplinary language. This is NOT a letter for or against disaffiliation. It is a letter pondering the logic of disaffiliation NOW.

I am baffled by the number of churches who sought or are seeking disaffiliation right now. At this point nothing has changed. General Conference is more than a year away. Ironically, as conservative churches disaffiliate, the likelihood of the language changing increases. By leaving the denomination, they are potentially precipitating the very action they claim to oppose.

What happens in the event that the language doesn't change? What will those who have rushed to disaffiliate do then?

Also, my father used to caution against buying a car that was in its first model year. "Let them work out the kinks," he used to say. If you disaffiliate now, what are you going to join? Might it not be better to wait and let a new denomination "work out the kinks" before joining?

For the sake of argument, let's play a little game of "what if?" What if on May 2, 2024 (the last Thursday of General Conference) the vote to change the language of TBOD passed? What would be the effect of St. Anywhere UMC on May 5th? What would change? NOTHING!!! The same congregation who loves and cares for each other would gather to worship God together, listen to their beloved choir, and hear a sermon preached by the same pastor who was there the week before, and the week before that, etc.

"But, Jeremy, our BOD would have changed." Actually, no. Changes to The Book of Discipline do not take effect until January 1st of the following year.

"We might suddenly be overrun by members of the LGBTQ community!" Really? Do you think that after more than 30 years of publicly squabbling over this issue and denouncing homosexuality, that merely changing our language is going to convey a change in attitude and acceptance? I have spoken to several members of the LGBTQ community who tell me that they do not think a change in our denominational language will indicate to them a change in attitudes in local churches and they won't be visiting a UMC any time soon, no matter what happens at GC2024.

"I just can't stand the thought of a gay wedding in our sanctuary!" The BOD gives the sole discretion concerning weddings to the pastor, including heterosexual unions. There have been occasions when I would have refused to conduct a wedding had the couple not come to the realization that they should not get married. Other occasions when, because of elements the couple wanted in their wedding ceremony, I steered them to a venue other than the church. Should the language change, I would hope that a wise pastor would consider the prevailing sentiment in his or her congregation and make appropriate decisions regarding weddings and venues.

"What if we get a gay pastor? "What are the odds of that happening? Supposing that we continue to ordain elders as we have the last 3 years (just under 9 a year) and that an average number are gay (current figures are at about 7%) and we do that for the next 30 years, your odds in 2055 would be about 1 in 37. Most people will only experience about 20 pastors in their lifetime. So, a child born in 2025 would have to live almost 2 lifetimes to have a gay pastor in South Carolina. Furthermore, as the Bishops and Cabinets of the past have been very careful in making cross-racial appointments, I think they would ponder long and hard before appointing a gay pastor to a particular church.

Can we, as good Methodists, apply some Reason and Experience in addition to Scripture and Tradition?

Peace,

So, my friends, let us be calm. Let us look to our Board of Stewards for guidance. As I sit here writing this, I just looked over and saw a bulletin. Looking at it, I realize the words "Saint Paul" are about 5 times bigger than "United Methodist Church." I hope that is true. I hope that our love and concern for one another as a congregation is far greater than the wrangling of our denomination.

Jeremy



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
5 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service 1:00 Pickleball for Members 4:45 Youth United 6:00 UMM Meet	6	7	8 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	9 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	10 10:00 Threads of Agape	11 10:00 Threads of Agape
12 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service ~11:15 Blood Pressure checks 11:30 Souper Bowl Lunch 1:00 Pickleball for Members	13 12:00 Elsie Greer Circle	14 11:30 49ers	15 10:00 Anne Ratliff Circle 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	16 10:00 Anne Ratliff Circle 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	17 10:00 Threads of Agape	18 10:00 Threads of Agape
19 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service 1:00 Pickleball for Members 4:45 Youth United	20 10:00 Blanche Greer Circle	21	22 6:00 Ash Wednesday Service	23 6:00 Ash Wednesday Service	24 10:00 Threads of Agape	25 10:00 Threads of Agape
26 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service 1:00 Pickleball for Members 4:45 Youth United	27	28				

Hand in Hand Ministries:

Dear Church Family,

As I reflect upon the EXTRAORDINARY response from you all to the Hand in Hand donations drive held this past Sunday, I think of two words that define you and our church body...UNITY and USEFULNESS. We are united by a shared faith, hope and love of Christ---one body that bears witness to what we collectively believe and the example He set for us. Following is our usefulness---that is, loving others in action and deed based on these shared beliefs. It is having a 'servant mind' that transforms us in His image and brings us joy.

Last Sunday morning at 9:00am, the shelves were almost bare at Hand in Hand. By 12:30pm, after three truckloads filled to the brim with your gifts which were taken to Hand in Hand, every inch of every shelf was suddenly and fully stocked, along with a bountiful overflow of items stacked on the floor. How amazing!

This is Unity. This is Usefulness. This is Saint Paul.

On behalf of the Hand in Hand team, THANK YOU for your loving kindness. THANK YOU for caring SO deeply, and SO visibly, for our children and families in need!

Sincerely,

Carol Mabry

Please visit our newly launched website at www.handinhandspartanburg.org.

Altar & Narthex Flowers



Altar Flowers are given on February 5th for the Glory of God by Guy and Nell Davis in honor of their children and grandchildren.

Altar Flowers are given on February 12th for the Glory of God by Bobbi Duncan in memory of her sister, Mary.

Altar Flowers: If you would like to Honor or Remember someone special by arranging for flowers to be placed on the Altar, the following dates are still available to sign-up:

February 19 & 26, March 12 & 26, May 21 & 28, July 30, September 3, October 1, 15 & 22, November 19

Please email or call Lisa Müller or Wanda Steele with both your request and the dedication to put in the bulletin.

Financials & Attendance

	Jan. 1	Jan. 8	Jan. 15	Jan. 22	Jan. 29
Received	\$3,161	\$10,762	\$10,232	\$11,767	
Non-Contributed	\$0	\$0	\$41	\$21	
Restricted	\$348	\$432	\$676	\$376	
Total	\$3,509	\$11,194	\$10,949	\$12,164	
Sunday School	41	44	33	38	
Worship Service	93	107	97	109	

*If you would like to put church-related information in the next Newsletter, please send an email with your "blurb" to churchsecretary@stpumc.org by February 20, 12:00pm.