



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

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

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

The Epistle

News For The Weeks Of
March 4, 11, 18, & 25, 2024

www.stpumc.org **web**

(864) 583-0850 **fax**

Return Services Requested

The Pastor's Pen

Several months ago I was driving through town and I noticed an old car sitting in the road ahead of me, but in the other lane, outside of an auto repair shop. The car is owned, I guess, by the auto shop and they were in the process of moving it across the street where I often see it sitting along with cars waiting to be repaired. To do this, they were using an ATV equipped with an old tire mounted on the front to cushion the impact and prevent scratching. Which then put me in mind of the message I have seen lately on the marquee in front of a church:

**Pray
Until
Something
Happens**

[I know...my mind works in funny ways sometimes. Ok, most of the time.] Pray until something happens. That, of course, got me thinking about prayer. What is prayer?

Too often, I'm afraid, in our lives prayer is one of two things. If you will permit me a couple of metaphors (well, to be more accurate, a simile and a metaphor). 1. Prayer is like Amazon. Yep. We log in, place our order, and wait for God to deliver. And most of us feel as if we are Prime members, so God needs to deliver within two days. Further, we would love the option to track the status of our order. "God, when is it going to get here?"

2. Prayer is a work order informing God the mechanic/plumber/repairman/doctor (choose your favorite image here) of what is broken and needs to be fixed in our lives. And please don't point out that the damage that needs to be repaired is the result of our own actions. Just fix us and/or this painful situation that we find ourselves in. "Actually, Lord, I'm not so sure it is me that needs fixing as much as it is my wife/husband/boss/children/girlfriend/boyfriend/etc."

In several sermons I have presented prayer, if you will accept another metaphor, as a phone conversation between two friends. That prayer is time we spend with God sharing our thoughts and feelings, our joys and concerns, our hopes and our disappointments, our confessions and our petitions. AND, it is a time we should listen. To sit quietly and let God speak to us in the wandering of our thoughts. To open our minds to new possibilities.

My initial reaction to "Pray Until Something Happens" was not positive. My first interpretation was that here was another expression of the passive attitude we often have. "Lord, I've prayed about it and now I'm going to sit here until you do something." We act as if we are sitting in the old car and God is driving the ATV that will push us while we steer. Or, "Lord, please push my problems away."

But then, in that weird way that my mind works, I had another thought...What if we got on the ATV? What if we teamed up with prayer and it became the vehicle that empowered us to push through the difficult circumstances, to push aside our doubts and fears, to push onward in faith? What if in those quiet moments with God we found the peace that is so lacking in our lives? What if we found the strength to try new things? What if we discovered new ways of looking at our situation that gave us hope? What if we found that "push" we need to move ourselves in a new direction? What if, instead of sitting around waiting on God, we got up and pushed ourselves?

If we accept the idea that prayer is more about changing us than about changing God, then I think Pray Until Something Happens might not be such a bad idea after all. "Change my heart, O God....."

God's blessings this year!



Jeremy

March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service 1:00 Pickleball for Members 6:00 UMM Lydia Vereen	4 Ed Lamb Linda Hamel	5 11:30 Elsie Greer Workday 6:00 Lenten Bible Study Phil Womble	6 6:30 Choir Rehearsal Beth Hudson Henry Purdy	7 Madelynn Purdy	1 10:00 Threads of Agape Guy Davis	2 June Wasness Beth Fenner Lamar Davis Kathy Angle Suzanne Mauldin
10 <i>Daylight Savings begins</i> 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service ~11:15 Church Planning Council Mtg. 1:00 Pickleball for Members	11 Ann Jackson Ted Fansher	12 11:30 49ers 6:00 Lenten Bible Study 7:00 Alice Walker Circle (outside venue) Neth Nettles	13 6:30 Choir Rehearsal Neth Nettles	14 5:45 PS Board Meeting	15 10:00 Threads of Agape	16 Betty Doyle
17 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service 1:00 Pickleball for Members Deb Schumann	18 9:30 Blanche Greer Circle Ann Jackson Ted Fansher	19 6:00 Lenten Bible Study Jane May Amy Coker Pascoe	20 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	21 5:30 Seder Fellowship Meal 7:00 Maundy Thursday Service	22 Good Friday	23 Julie Smith Karen Moyer
24 Palm Sunday 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service 1:00 Pickleball for Members Stephen Stamm	25 Newsletter Deadline	26 6:00 Lenten Bible Study	27 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	28 5:30 Seder Fellowship Meal 7:00 Maundy Thursday Service	29 Good Friday	30 Julie Smith Karen Moyer
31 Easter Sunday 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service 1:00 Pickleball for Members						

Altar & Narthex Flowers



Altar Flowers are given on March 10th for the glory of God by Lillian Hudson in honor of daughter, Beth Hudson's, birthday.

Altar Flowers are given on March 17th for the glory of God by A.D. and Johnsie Page in memory of their son, Andy's, birthday.

Narthex Flowers are given on March 17th for the glory of God by A.D. and Johnsie Page in honor of their 67th Anniversary.

The Elsie Greer Circle

will meet on Tuesday, March 5, at the church for a workday between 9:00AM and 12:00PM. A chili and vegetable soup lunch will be served at 12:00PM in Poston Hall. Text or call Eileen at 590-1891 to RSVP.

The Church Planning Council will meet on Sunday, March 10, right after worship service, in the Library. The meeting will be 45 minutes to an hour. Please plan to attend.

Financials & Attendance

	Jan. 28	Feb. 4	Feb. 11	Feb. 18
Received	\$4,604	\$8,834	\$6,360	\$6,762
Non-Restricted	\$56	\$0	\$3.75	\$579.90
Restricted	\$22	\$108	\$772	\$2,100
Total	\$4,682	\$8,942	\$7,135.75	\$9,441.90
Sunday School	29	33	33	33
Worship	88	91	83	92

The 49ers will be meeting on Tuesday, March 12th at 11:30AM in Poston Hall. Our guest speaker will be Linda Cooper, a local Spartanburg resident. Her story is that she has been struck by lightning 6 times and is still here to tell us about her ordeals. The church will provide chicken and tea. Please bring a favorite dish to share.

I will need a few volunteers to help set up and clean up. Please call me at 864-706-7936 if you can help.
Susan Owens

Our Maundy Thursday Service will be at 6:00PM on Thursday, March 28th in our beautiful sanctuary. We hope to see you there.

Our March Fellowship Meal will be on March 28th at 5:30PM in Poston Hall. This meal will be a Seder Meal which will be eaten before the Maundy Thursday Service at 7:00PM. We hope you'll join us for this meaningful time together.

Easter Flowers: As is customary, we would like to ask our members to please bring flowers from your yards to put on our Easter cross on Easter morning. Thank you!



The Preschool Board has chosen Kaci Roberts to serve as the Saint Paul UMC Preschool Administrative Director. Kaci has over 12 years with us and knows our Preschool well! Congratulations, Kaci!

*If you would like to put church-related information in the Newsletter, please send an email with your "blurb" to churchsecretary@stpumc.org before the Newsletter deadline date, March 25th. Thank you!