



Tower Tidings

September 2025

Palmyra First United Methodist Church



In a day and age of online shopping, Facebook “friends”, and opportunities for online worship, I wonder how many people still think there is a benefit to getting out of bed, dressing, and then driving to church to attend worship in person. After all, you can watch the service in your pajamas as you are eating your breakfast.

While I was giving this some thought, I ran across an article written by a retired pastor with the assistance of AI (Artificial Intelligence). He had asked the computer program, “What is the benefit of attending church in person?” AI gave a number of reasons, including personal interaction, fellowship, and emotional support. Even though we often criticize computers and their pocket-sized companions (A.K.A. smart phones) of encouraging isolation from one another, AI seemed to be in favor of in-person attendance over online attendance at church services. How about you? Do you favor the inconvenience of coming to church or do you prefer the online experience?

For me, I’ve had enough Zoom meetings and webinars. I appreciate the interactions of a congregation that is live and in-person. Thinking back to the Covid days, it was a much different preaching experience delivering a sermon to an empty sanctuary and a camera. Maybe it is just my style, but I appreciate being able to see and hear reactions, to use as a sermon example someone whose face I can see. I appreciate the feedback I get in real time.

If I were not a pastor, without extenuating circumstances, there is no way I could sit through an online service. I’d get distracted by the things going on around me. My mind would tend to wander and I would miss the personal interactions with people.

There is a place for online worship! It provides a preview of our style for those considering what church they should attend in person. It is also a great tool for our unwillingly absent members and friends. Online worship can help those who are unable to be here in person stay connected with the congregation, but it is still not the same experience.

I encourage you to be here in person as often as possible. Sit toward the front – within camera range. This will help our unwillingly absent members feel a bit more connected with you and it will allow the visiting viewer to see what the congregation actually does during our worship. Being an example for others is just another way of **“Serving Christ, Changing Lives.”** See you Sunday!

Grace & Peace,

James D. Anderman, Pastor



As September rolls around, the church schedule takes on a new sense of normality. *Noah's Little Ark Christian Preschool* returns to the 5-day-a-week format. "Monthly" meetings are again held monthly, and like the swallows returning to Capistrano, the Seltzer Sisters return to the Retreat Center.

Liturgically, September is entirely within the long Season of Kingdomtide, and our color remains green, symbolizing growth. The only September holiday is Labor Day, but since it falls on the first of the month, Labor Day Sunday is in August!

Our worship themes for September and Early October are as follows:

September 7th: Pastor Jim will be celebrating the 50 anniversary of the merger of Centenary UMC and Trinity UMC in Lebanon. He was there when the vote was taken and will return with his siblings to the successor church where they all spent some formative years. Millard Fisher will be our "guest" preacher and consecrate the elements for the sacrament of Holy Communion.

In today's gospel lesson, Jesus does a very unusual thing. He shows that he is much more interested in honesty than He is with getting the responses He wants. How might following His example change ourselves and our culture? Our Scriptures are Psalm 139:7-12 and Luke 14:25-33. The sermon title is "Honest Evangelism", and we will celebrate Holy Communion together.

September 14th: Who should be welcomed in the church? Should we admit blasphemers and people of violence? Should we sully the reputation of the church by fellowshiping with sinners? This week, we will look at 1 Timothy 1:12-17 and Luke 15:1-10 for some biblical answers. Are we upholding the standards of the bible, or are we falling short? Our message is titled "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors – to Whom?"

September 21st: Throughout the Bible, there are various accounts of healings. Some in the Old Testament, some in the New. Is there still a place for faith healings in the 21st-Century Christian Church? I believe so; therefore, this week we will hold a service for "Healing and Wholeness." Our scriptures will be taken from 2 Kings 5:1-14 and Luke 8:42b-49 and the message will be "The Power of God."

September 28th: What is the meaning of life? What is truth? Two age-old questions. One has been universally asked down through the ages, and the other by Pontius Pilate. This Sunday, we will consider these two questions. For a biblical perspective, we will read from John 18:33-38a and 1 Timothy 6:6-19. Our message will be "A Meaningful Life." This Sunday, we will also offer you an opportunity to renew your commitment to a meaningful life through your commitment to Christ's Holy Church

October 5th, World Communion Sunday: On this World Communion Sunday, we are going to examine our United Methodist Theology of the sacrament. Our scriptures will come from Luke 22:14-21, 24:13-35. The message is titled "Why the Open Table?"



Small Group Studies

The Blessed Misfits

The Blessed Misfits is *Palmyra First's* ongoing study group, where the members choose a new book as they wrap up one book and are ready to move on to the next. The group sometimes looks at a book of the Bible and at other times reads a book about our faith, Christian living, or other topics of interest.

Right now, the group is in the middle of studying Luke and Acts from the *Disciple Bible Study Fast Track* series. Around the end of October, we will be ready to start a new study, which would be a great time to join the group. So, if you are looking for a stimulating conversation for a Wednesday evening, consider joining the *Misfits* for our next study. The *Misfits* meet in the *South Wing* and via *Zoom* every Wednesday evening at 6:30 PM. We would love to welcome you as part of the group when we begin the next book.

Sunday with the Wired Word

How should a Christian react to the news of the day? The *Wired Word*, our Sunday morning study group, deals with just this kind of issue. The lessons are published each Thursday and are drawn from the headlines. 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, plan ahead and let Lee Smedley know you want to be a part of things. If he has your email address, he will add you to his distribution list so you have a heads up on the topic of the week. You can expect your email on Thursday. Because the topic changes each week, this is an ideal study for those who can't commit to a weekly study.

Celebrate Recovery

Celebrate Recovery (CR) is a 12-Step Christ-Centered program designed to help individuals overcome their hurts, hang-ups, and habits. The program is ideal for people dealing with a variety of issues ranging from grief to depression, to behavioral addictions, to chemical addictions, and just about anything in between. They meet every Friday evening at 6:30 PM at *Palmyra First*.

If you would like to be a part of the program, or part of the team, let us know by calling the church, emailing the pastor at pastorjim@palmyrafirst.org, or letting us know at the information desk any Sunday morning.

Discovery Dunes

Discovery Dunes is our Sunday School class for the children. They meet every Sunday morning at 10:30 AM to learn about Jesus and the stories of the Bible. They sing songs of God and Jesus, and do fun crafts and activities, while the adults attend Sunday Morning Service in the Sanctuary.



Volunteer Opportunities

Palmyra First Church offers many opportunities to put your faith into action. Below are just a few of the opportunities available:



Sunday Morning Opportunities:

Greeters: There are many opportunities to help people have a high-quality experience every Sunday morning. We are looking for people to greet our visitors, members, and friends. The task is as simple as being a friendly face, offering a bulletin, mentioning the service opportunities of the week, and for visitors pointing the way to coffee, restrooms, Sunday School rooms, and the sanctuary.

Liturgist: Our liturgists tasks vary depending on the service. At the 9:00 AM service, the liturgist reads the scriptures after the pastor explains what to listen for and offers the *Prayer for Illumination*. At the 10:30 AM service, the liturgist leads the call to worship, occasionally leads a responsive reading as well as reading scriptures.

Mission Opportunities:

Palmyra First Church is involved in a variety of missions. You can be a part of a HUB packing party where cleaning (flood) buckets and health kits are assembled. Another option is to volunteer at the *Caring Cupboard* by helping provide food for our neighbors in need. On the first Friday of the month, *Palmyra First* sponsors *First Friday's with First* when we work with *Habitat for Humanity* rebuilding homes for first time home buyers. With Habitat, you can learn some basic home building and repair skills. And remember, there is a job for every skill level – even if you think you have no building skills!

Property Maintenance:

We have a dedicated group of individuals who help maintain both the Birch and Green Street campus and the *Seltzer Retreat Center*. Some cut the grass at both facilities, others rake leaves, pick up fallen tree limbs, pull weeds, water flowers, and rake mulch into place.

Inside the building, we have people who keep the kitchen equipment clean, do minor repairs, change lightbulbs, change the clocks, and so many other things.

There is a maintenance opportunity for everyone.

Audio/Video Team

Our A/V team does all the things necessary to live cast our regular services, funerals, and other special events in the Sanctuary. For some services, it can involve projecting things onto the large screen at the front of the sanctuary. Other jobs include turning microphones on and off while adjusting volumes. A third job is to use a joystick to aim the camera where it needs to be.

Administrative Tasks:

While Heidi does a fantastic job in the church office, she can only do so much! Volunteers help with folding and stuffing bulletins as well as preparing our weekly mailings to the unwillingly absent members and friends. We also need seasonal help with special mailings to the full mailing list of members and friends

We also use volunteers to keep the books, issue checks to pay our bills, prepare bank deposits, and prepare our financial statements.

What is God calling you to do? There is a volunteer opportunity for everyone.

These are just a few of the missions we are involved in. Watch the newsletter and bulletin for other opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Blood Drive at Palmyra First

There will be another blood drive on **Saturday, September 13th** here at *Palmyra First UMC* in the *Fellowship Hall* from 8:00 AM-4:00 PM. Each donor will receive a \$15 entrée certificate to the *Texas Roadhouse* in Palmyra. An appointment is recommended, but not required to donate. Please visit the Central PA Blood Bank to schedule for donation at 717giveblood.org or call 1-800-771-0059.



HUB News

For the month of September, we encourage you to donate pump spray air fresheners (must have lock or cap. no aerosol). Your support of this *United Methodist Committee on Relief* project is appreciated! Our next *HUB* packing is scheduled for **September 16th at 6:30 PM** in the *Fellowship Hall* here at *Palmyra First*.

Blessing of the Animals

Once again, we will be hosting a *Blessing of the Animals* event at *Palmyra First*. **October 4th** from **10:00 AM-3:00 PM**, bring your pet for a blessing and enjoy all the different vendors that will be there for food, drinks, craft items, and so much more! We will also have a table set up for donations to the *Caring Cupboard* and *Military Pets Share*.

All pets will receive a blessing certificate. They must be on a leash or in a carrier. The rain date is October 11th. A pet is not required to attend!

New Pickleball Schedule

Noah's Little Ark begins the new school year on September 2nd. At the same time, we begin our new pickleball schedule. Starting in September, pickleball will meet in the *Fellowship Hall* every Monday and Thursday evening from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM and the first Tuesday of each month from 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM. Please let Ken Fuhrman know if you have any questions or would like to join in on our pickleball fun!

First Friday With First

Our next *First Friday with First* build day with *Habitat For Humanity* will be on **Friday, September 5th**. We will be working in Lebanon at 1021 Walnut Street. If you have volunteered previously, be sure to go on their site and sign up. If you have not done this before, please contact Amy Dellinger and she will get you set up. She can be reached at 717-821-0298 or at amy.dellinger22@gmail.com.

Spaghetti Dinner for Rise Against Hunger

September 20th from 4:00 PM-7:00 PM, we will be having a spaghetti dinner at *Palmyra First* in the *Fellowship Hall*. All of the proceeds will benefit *Rise Against Hunger*. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for ages 10 and under. The meal includes spaghetti, salad, bread, and a drink. Dine-in or take-out. For more information or to get tickets, check with Karen Douds before or after Sunday service, or call the church office at 717-838-2551.



**“How did Joseph make his coffee?
Hebrewed it.”**

Dear Church Family,

We would like to thank Pastor Jim and all the other visitors to the hospital during my recent hospital stay. Also, to so many of you who texted, called, brought food and sent cards with words of comfort, encouragement, and care to both Sherry and myself. You do not realize what your kind words and thoughts meant to both of us.

Sincerely,

Tom & Sherry Bement



September 2nd, 2025:

First day of *Noah's Little Ark*
Christian Preschool!



T.E.A. Book Club

T.E.A. (Through the Eyes of Another) book group will meet Thursday, September 18th at 7:00 PM in the South Wing lounge to discuss the book ***Flight Behavior*** by Barbara Kingsolver. Joanne Baillet will be the discussion leader. New readers welcome. Contact Amy Dellinger with questions at amy.dellinger22@gmail.com.

United Women in Faith

Fall Celebration

Palmyra United Women in Faith is hosting the *Eastern PA Conference United Women in Faith Fall Celebration* on October 18th. There are sign-up sheets in *Fellowship Hall* for those who would like to attend. Help is also needed to bake muffins or a cake, or be a greeter.

Knit, Crochet, & Pray

Knit, Crochet, & Pray will meet **Wednesday, September 10th**, 1:30 PM-2:30 PM in the *South Wing Library*. We are working on mammogram reminder gifts, baby blankets, booties and bibs, and *Peace Pals*. Anyone interested in this charity needlework is welcome to join us. Our regular meeting dates are the second Wednesday of the month at 1:30 PM in the *South Wing Library*. If you have any questions contact Karen Douds at douds2@comcast.net.

September Discovery Dunes

As summer vacation comes to a close, we hope you had a fun, enriching experience this year. Over the summer we made the ***Raven*** who fed Elijah and ***Jonah's Whale***, played a relay game to fill a canning jar and learned that two working together is better than one. They played on the playground and did chalk art. They also sent cards to the unwillingly absent.

The following are the stories we will cover in the month of September.

Sept. 7	Hannah Prays	1 Samuel 1:1-28
Sept. 14	God Calls Samuel	1 Samuel 3:1-21
Sept. 21	Samuel Anoints Saul	1 Samuel 7:15-8:22, 10:17-24
Sept. 28	Samuel Anoints David	1 Samuel 16:1-23



Coin Cups for Rise Against Hunger

Hopefully, you have your coin cup and have been adding to it often. Everyone is asked to keep filling their cup with coins (and bills and checks) for several weeks. If you don't have yours yet, please stop at the welcome desk and get one! We are working toward raising \$6,000 so we can pack 15,000 meals in three hours on November 8th! Cups should be returned by **September 28th**.

Updated Church Chair Positions

Church Council

Jim Anderman	Pastor
Lee Smedley	Chair of Staff Parish Relations
Donna Goddard	Financial Secretary
Open	Financial Chair
Tim Yingst	Chair of Church Council
Dave Yascavage	Treasurer
Terri Kestner	Special Funds & Trustee Treasurer
Donna Hassenfritz	Sunday School Superintendent
Bill Hassenfritz	Lay Member of Annual Conference
Sue McKelvie	Representing Missions
*Jill Funck	NLA Director
Gwen Pvasco	United Women in Faith

Trustees

Tim Yingst	President
Sherry Bement	Vice-President
Randy Wright	Secretary
Phil Delvernois	Trustee
Jeff Hess	Trustee
Dave Williams	Trustee
Bob Douds	Trustee
Terri Kestner	Treasurer

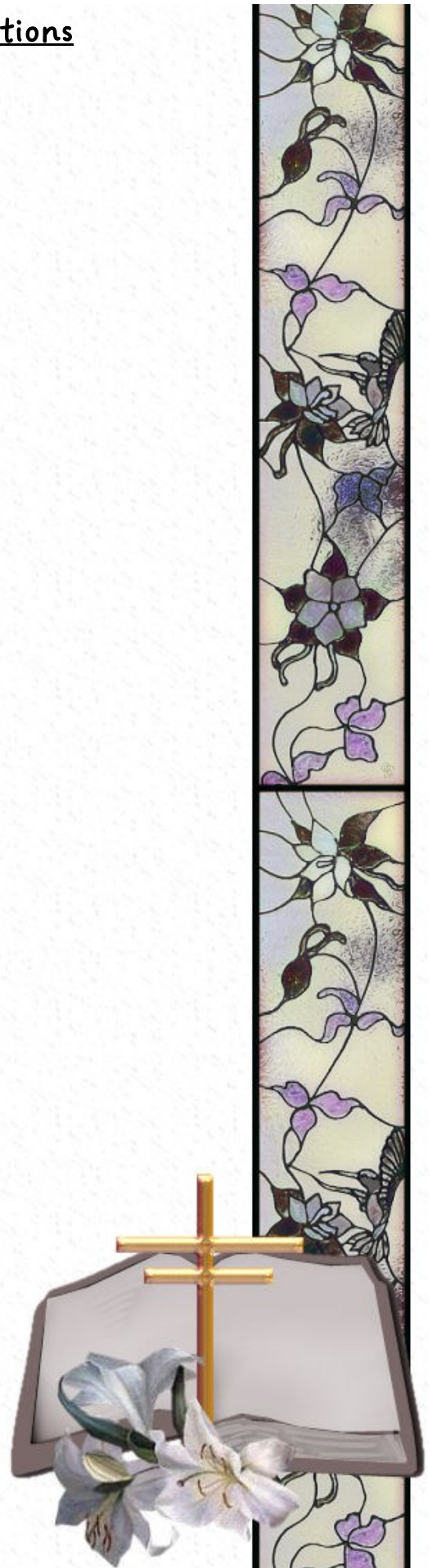
Vision Team

Jim Anderman	Emily Horn
Terri Kestner	Colleen Williams
Randy Miller	Carol Yingst

Missions

Karen Douds, Chair
Sue McKelvie
Judy Delvernois
Bonnie Parks

* Non Voting Members



Updated Church Chair Positions Cont...

Staff Parish Relations Committee

Lee Smedley	Chair of Staff Parish Relations Committee
Judy Delvernois	Staff Parish Relations
Amy Dellinger	Staff Parish Relations
Bonnie Parks	Staff Parish Relations
Linda Sheddy	Staff Parish Relations
Randy Miller	Staff Parish Relations
Joanne Balliet	Staff Parish Relations

Small Group Leaders

Jim Anderman Contact Person:
Blessed Misfits pastorjim@palmyrafirst.org

Sally Smedley Contact Person:
The TEA Group sallys50frogs@gmail.com
UWF Group
Knit, Crochet and Pray

Lee Smedley Contact Person:
Sunday Morning Bible Group smedleylee@gmail.com
(The Wired Word)

Celebrate Recovery Contact Person:
Mike Pvasco celebraterecovery@palmyrafirst.org
Gwen Pvasco

Missions

*Karen Douds Committee Chair
*Sue McKelvie Representing Missions at Council

Noah's Little Ark Advisory Board

Debbie DiNunzio, Chair	Sherry Bement	
Becky Hassler	Carol Yingst	Ann Reigle

