



January 2018

The Goodnews Letter

St. Paul United Methodist Church

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Volume 32 Issue 1 Pastor Robert Reeves

From the Pastor's Desk

May the Lord grant you His wisdom and guidance to live life at its best in HIS purpose into this New Year 2018 HE has given us!

You'd probably guessed that a January Newsletter article will have something to do with goals, resolutions or new starts and you are right! The problem is we get tired of hearing about something we really don't have an in-depth determination to do anything about.

If you are satisfied with the results you are obtaining in life, then new starts can be scary. I certainly do not intend to make anyone feel bad about themselves. That said, the rest of this article is about using the New Year start to evaluate what we could improve.

First, any very healthy Disciple will give time and attention to evaluation and new starts in their life journey. I cannot find any productive healthy prosperous local church or business that doesn't remind their staff and participants of this truth. Evaluation of one's self is essential to keep blind spots from damaging our potential.

Second, any very healthy Disciple will long to enhance their ability to effectively study and gain new insight into the Word of GOD. Healthy Disciples study the scripture continuously and gain new wisdom in the process.

The truth is I have discovered that many of my parishioners have never really learned to study the scriptures. The reasons for this are many, but one of them is simply this: they have never attended a Bible Study!

To give those who attend church but not Bible Studies a chance to learn about them, we will be doing something new into 2018. We will devote one Sunday service every other month to a Bible Study format. There will be a brief opening worship, prayer and offering followed by a Bible Study rather than a standard sermon. When you see it, you'll like it!

Third, we will address the greatest gift our Heavenly Father offers anyone, Forgiveness!!!

The gift and discipline of forgiveness is one of the most challenging means of grace any Disciple will ever deal with.

The following is a fact: Christians who live in unforgiveness harm themselves and greatly limit the continued purposes of the LORD in their life.

Fourth, enough cannot be said about our involvement in servant ministry. Therefore, great purpose can be found in our quest to find the servant ministries best suited to our talents. Simply put, the greatest fulfillment comes from putting others first and meeting their needs when possible. In what ways are we involved in any form of servant ministry?

During the month of January these topics and others will be discussed in the preaching material.

May the LORD grant you HIS best plans in the New Year 2018!

Pastor Robert

Acolytes

- 7. Nolan Akins
- 14. Eve Morrow
- 21. Zoey Hall
- 28. Michael Perry

Visitation

- 7. Pastor Robert
- 14. Minnie Goodman
- 21. Lynn Alexander
- 28. Sandy Webb

Ushers

- 7. Randy Stowe & Charles Goodman, Sr.
- 14. Vince Maglio & Doug Summer
- 21. Billy Watkins & Joe Eubanks
- 28. Bo Herndon & Randy Stowe

Lay Assistant

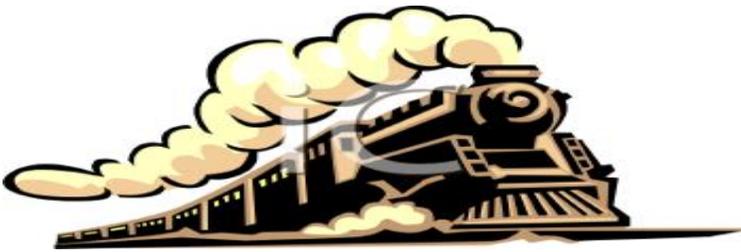
- 7. Melinda Brinkley
- 14. Jimmy Brinkley
- 21. Charles Goodman, Sr.
- 28. Rick Crosby

Offering Accountants

Randy Stowe & Shelly James

SS Assembly Refreshment

- 7. Louise Best Circle
- 14, 21, 28 SS Assembly Group



Your 5th Promise

“I will be a witness.”

Part 2

A “How To” Suggestion

•O. K. witnesses.

The St. Paul express is ready to make its first stop and pick up passengers. Putting a train track in place that makes stops in New Ellenton is a pretty far reach, for all that is left of the original train system going through Aiken is a few rails and a copy of the old train station. You'll have to use your imagination for this last 2017 stewardship letter and perhaps think of places where they do have active commuter trains as well as those routes that go from one end of the US to the other. For our local train route, we need to think of who would be getting on and off our train, what their needs might be and how we can help them.

Let's pretend that we have halted our make-believe train and it stretches from the Mall, back down Main Street in New Ellenton and continues to the Savannah River Plant. Since no one is expecting to find a train in the middle of Route 19, it's bound to cause a certain amount of curiosity and consternation.

Law enforcement is probably on the scene immediately and when they discover our train is there on purpose and not by accident, they begin the process of trying to remove it from where a train should not be. Cars are honking and people are furious because their lives have been completely disrupted.

Meanwhile, the conductor calmly proceeds to open the entrances to the train and invites everyone on board. A few are curious enough to take his offer and start to stroll through the train to see what it is all about.

Now is the opportunity to make people feel welcome. They are not here to be given a lecture on why they should be in church or invited to sit down with the Bible Study people and have it pointed out to them how much they don't know. It's our job to be especially caring and understanding at this point in time. Perhaps there's a mother with kids who are driving her crazy, and who are now determined to tear the train apart. Maybe there's a person who is lonely and is happy to have someone to actually listen to them. Perhaps we can soothe others who are upset at the delay and want to complain.

Some of our group, especially Outreach, get off the train and calm those who are visibly upset because of the interruption in daily activities. This stop is for getting acquainted with people who may be travelers on our train and observing their needs. It takes many short visits to make acquaintances with people who want to hear the Gospel, a necessity if we believe the old hymn “Life Is Like a Mountain Railroad and we need the Gospel message if we're going to make a run successfully from the cradle to the grave.” It is not an easy run.

It's highly unlikely that we will park our imaginary train on Route 19 and gather a bunch of people to attend services at St. Paul, but there are certainly many people in our area who do not go to church. How do we reach them? I repeat a paragraph from last month's letter.

How much has your life changed because you agreed to follow Jesus? What evidence do you have personally that would convince anyone Jesus is who He claims to be? Is He your personal friend? Have you really felt His help when everything seems to be going wrong?

Your 5th Promise continued:

Do you give Him credit when everything is going right? Do you believe the Bible is valid? How many times have you read it from cover to cover? How often have you studied it book by book and applied the messages to your life? Have you really learned the joy of experiencing the presence of the Master? If none (or very little) of the above applies to your life, you have very little evidence to offer anyone that it would be worth their while to invite Jesus into their lives!

However if they do apply (and I'm convinced they do) then you are ready to think about inviting people to come with you to worship, but before you invite, make sure they understand that church is a place of recovering sinners. Church folks can and do fall off the wagon and need to have Jesus pick them up, dust them off, put them back on their feet so they can start all over again and, hopefully, get it right the next time. Learning to live the best possible life means getting rid of things that are actually destroying you. That's what church is about!

In the coming months you might like to try the exercise I gave the Bible Class a few weeks back.

- Start every morning recognizing and acknowledging the greatness of our Savior. That's praise!
- Turn your day over to Him and follow His lead. That's trust!
- Make a list of everyone you come in contact with each day. Yes, your family especially.
- If they attend church somewhere, encourage them.
- If they don't go to church, listen to them carefully. Seldom does anyone give up past habits without seeing why they should. Don't nag! Don't push. The point is to show them gently that having the Presence of Jesus with them constantly is really something to be desired. That's patience. If they see it in you, they may want to give it a try.
- In chatting with people on a daily basis, give them a helping hand when they need it, let them know that you care when no one else seems to, invite them to Sunday School (if they've never been, tell them why you go), or other church services and events and let them know how much you'd enjoy their company.

As you should have noticed in the Stewardship letters you've been receiving, heavy emphasis has been placed on being good stewards of the life God had given us. Unless we get that part right there is little point in discussing money for we tend to give only to those things we know are important. If we don't pay the light bill, we sit in the dark. If we don't support the church we sit in spiritual darkness.

Just as we rethink where we are personally we need to look at where the church is financially. My thanks to those of you who made it possible to end 2017 in the black as far as our local expenses are concerned. However we were not able to pay any of our apportionments last year and we will be working toward completing that obligation in 2018. You will be hearing more about that as the year progresses.

As you compare the December/January budget information on the back of the bulletin, you will note a difference in the FLC loan. We have just completed refinancing our loan and, as a result, our payments will be slightly lower. You will also note the reduction in our General Budget. While these two amounts are now lower, you must remember that these have been reduced to bare bones basic needs. A major repair bill is something we do not want to see in 2018. It is vital that we receive \$634 per week for the FLC and \$3171 per week for the general fund. The Finance Committee will be watching this income very carefully and you will be kept aware of those financial needs on a monthly basis.

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Doreen Arns / Betty Fischer office@umcne.org

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
X		1 Office Closed	2 <i>Helen Bessinger</i> (B)	3 M & M Choir 6 Adult Choir 7	4	5 <i>Karen Mitchell</i>	6
7	Sunday Assembly 9 FH Sunday School 9:30 Sunday Worship 10:30 <i>Polly Alexander</i> (B)	8 Friendship Circle 7 <i>Ann Summer</i> (B)	9 UMM Winter Dinner Red Lobster 6:30 All Invited!	10 LBC 10 FH M & M Choir 6 Adult Choir 7	11	12	13 <i>Rachel Williams</i> (B)
14	Sunday Assembly 9 FH Sunday School 9:30 Sunday Worship 10:30 M&Ms sing <i>Curtis Lowe Summer</i> (B)	15 <i>Drucilla Parker</i> (B)	16	17 Nurture/Outreach 7 FLC No Adult Choir	18	19	20
21	Sunday Assembly 9 FH Sunday School 9:30 Sunday Worship 10:30 Finance Comm. Mtg. 3 BCR <i>Michael B. Ramos</i> (B) <i>Tony Bailor</i> (B)	22	23	24 Adult Choir 7	25 <i>C. Goodman, Sr.</i> (B)	26 <i>Billy Stephens</i> (B)	27
28	Sunday Assembly 9 FH Sunday School 9:30 Sunday Worship 10:30 Admin. Council Mtg. 3 BCR	29	30	31 Adult Choir 7			(A) Anniversary (B) Birthday