



From the desk of Pastor Ann

I heard it said once that the ideal pastor is 29-years-old and has been preaching 30 years. There is a gulf between the real, and the ideal. Reality rarely matches the ideal.

The book of Romans talks about the ideal Christian. Romans is a beautiful letter, written by a mature Paul near the end of his ministry. He sets out the ideal for all of us seeking to be more like Christ.

Think for a second about the perfect, ideal you. Think about the possibility of doing perfectly everything you can do. When we think about that, we realize that our ideal is not the same as who we really are. There is both good and bad within each of us. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The book of Romans gives us hope. We are saved by grace, through faith in Christ. Nothing we do or strive to do makes us worthy of God's love. Romans 5:8 says, "But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us."

Here is the problem. God loves us, as imperfect as we are, but sometimes we have a hard time loving each other when the other person makes a mistake or does not meet our expectations.

When God created us we lived in perfect harmony. Then we chose satisfying our selves and our own needs OVER trusting God and satisfying God. The result is this broken world.

As one commentary puts it, "The result is we feel hatred and separation instead of love and connection. We feel other's envy instead of their appreciation and gratitude. We feel sad and angry instead of joyous. We panic and worry instead of feeling safe and secure. We feel shame and self-hatred instead of love and self-confidence. And finally, we feel utter fear and terror of God, instead of overwhelming awe and love."

The only way to move forward is to confess that there is both good and bad within each of us, and that there is both good and bad in others. Romans reminds us our relationships between the ideal and the real needs to be one of grace. One of unconditional love and acceptance. Romans 15:7 says, "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

Good relationship involves holding on to the ideal, and lovingly accepting the real. Only when the real is accepted can it be encouraged to grow toward the ideal.

And when what is bad within us hurts someone else, scripture reminds us to confess it. Confess it to the one we have hurt, and to God. When we confess, we can be forgiven. Only then can God heal our broken hearts, our broken church, our broken lives.

It is through these struggles that our faith is refined. When we begin to think of others above ourselves, something shifts within us. We are transformed by the living word of God.

We no longer read God's word to check off a list. We read God's word, as it says in Romans, for the renewing of our minds in Christ Jesus so that we will no longer be conformed to this broken world.

We cannot move from reality toward the ideal on our own. We do it by the strength of the one who lives within us. This transformation begins when we are honest with ourselves, and with God.

I offer this prayer from Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." Amen.

Praying I see you Sunday, either in person or online. Blessings, Ann.

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Monroe, GA 30655
770-267-7844
unionchapel@

Prayer Requests this week: Jake Camp, Harold Palmer, Mary Darby, Leah Cullars, Johnny (Patty Wright's cousin), Doug Parker. **Families of:** Rege Fechter and Ruby Reeves.

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

Friends, we want to be in prayer for each other, without ceasing. Since we are not all meeting in person, please email your prayer request directly to: ann.mann@ngumc.net. Please submit your request by noon on Saturday.

Our children enjoyed a trip to RUSH trampoline park in Athens Sunday after church.
Thanks to the parents and children who participated, and thank you to
Cindy and Kenneth for organizing the outing.



Weekly Attendance

Date	Attendance	Online	Sunday School
01/30/2022	63	84	17
01/23/2022	65	78	25
01/16/2022	Inclement Weather	127	
01/09/2022	54	41	16
01/02/2022	59	130	20



**United Methodist Women
Monday, February 7th
6 PM
Fellowship Hall**

The United Methodist Women will be taking bags to our shut-ins in February. We will be collecting items at our Feb meeting (2/7/22 @ 6:00 pm in the fellowship hall).

Some recommended items are and we need 12 of each item:

Heart shaped box of chocolates (Pastor Ann providing)
large print word search & Valentine Cards (Cindy Elsmore providing)
heart shaped items
socks
peppermint
hand sanitizer
lotion
Kleenex
Hot chocolate
Coffee mugs

We already have cute Valentine bags, thanks to Pastor Ann for picking them up.

If you would like to supply one of these items, please reply to my email
(sent out last week. If you didn't get the email, please let us know.)

Blessings, Patty Wright, UMW President

p.aultman@yahoo.com

Administrative Council News

The Administrative Council met Sunday, January 30th, and voted to explore disaffiliation with the United Methodist Church. There are those in the church who are not comfortable with the possible changes in the United Methodist Church Book of Discipline regarding human sexuality. The changes being proposed would allow practicing homosexuals to become preachers and would also allow homosexual marriage. The current Book of Discipline recognizes marriage between one woman and one man.

This intention to explore disaffiliation was conveyed in an email to our District Superintendent, Dr. Rodrigo Cruz on Monday January, 31st. Once this email was sent, Union Chapel United Methodist Church may no longer receive new members. So, only those currently on our membership rolls will have a vote in this matter.

The next step is an informational meeting with Dr. Cruz, set for Sunday, February 27th at 2pm in the main sanctuary. Please spend the time between now and the meeting reading about what this involves, and **praying** about the direction God would have us go. If those present at the informational meeting decide not to proceed, we continue as we are.

If those present at the meeting decide to proceed with disaffiliation, a charge conference will be scheduled at least ten days later. At the charge conference an official and binding vote on disaffiliation will be taken. Two-thirds of the members present must vote in favor of disaffiliation for the matter to proceed.

Should the membership vote to not to disaffiliate, we continue as we are. Should the membership vote to disaffiliate, Union Chapel would receive an agreement outlining the steps that must be taken to secure all property and go out on our own, as outlined in paragraph 2553 in the Book of Discipline.

These steps would include what Union Chapel would owe to the Conference, and when those payments would be due. According to the printed guidelines, we would owe one year of our apportionments, we would also owe a set amount to cover unfunded pension liability. And we would have to remove “United Methodist Church” from all signs, publications and legal documents. Dr. Cruz says there is no plan that allows churches to disaffiliate without paying these financial obligations.

If we meet the terms of the agreement, the North Georgia Annual Conference would vote to approve disaffiliation at the Annual Conference June 2-4th. If that vote passes, then Union Chapel would no longer be a United Methodist Church. We may remain independent, affiliate with another Methodist body, or another denomination.

You are encouraged to read more about the disaffiliation process. Here is a link to the Conference website: <https://www.ngumc.org/disaffiliation-process-and-information>

Prison Ministry Opportunity



Have you felt the call to participate in prison ministry? I recently spent several hours inside Whitworth Women's Facility. When we go for these monthly reunions, one of the residents gives a testimony. The woman who spoke (I'll call her Penny) said she came to the Kairos weekend for the food. Inmates do not get three meals a day on the weekends. But they do if they attend the Kairos weekend, and the food is things they don't normally get.

Penny was a loner. She described herself as singular, as someone who had been hurt one too many times, so she decided she didn't need anyone. And while she listened to our story of God's love, it didn't reach her heart. Even so, the seeds of God's grace and truth were planted on that weekend three years ago.

On these weekends each table bears the name of a woman in the Bible to remind the inmates that we all have a place at the table no matter what we've done. We all get a second chance with Jesus.

She sat at the table of Esther. And after the weekend was over, she began reading the story of Esther. She was struck by the line that Esther was born for "such a time as this." She felt that her incarceration made her re-evaluate her life, and her faith. She took a hard look at her life.

And God's love finally reached her through Esther's story. It helped her see that she was NEVER alone. God was with her all along. So, she embraced the fellowship of believers, and she has experienced the joy that comes from surrendering her life to Christ. Penny gets released this month, so she will leave with a new purpose.

If you would like to be a part of this life-changing prison ministry, we have a weekend coming up April 21-24th at Whitworth Women's Facility in Hartwell, Georgia. We will spend the nights either in a hotel, or in the homes of volunteers in the area.

Training begins in February and is held at Bold Springs UMC. You would need to make all the training sessions (although you may miss one if needed.) Here is the training schedule: Feb. 5th, Feb 26th, March 5th, March 26th, April 2nd. The meetings are usually about 9am to 3pm. If you are interested, please let me know.

February 1, 2022 - February 13, 2022

Weekly Happenings**Tuesday, February 1, 2022**

6:30 PM Young Adult Bible Study @ the Elsmore's
 7 PM Youth Bible Study @ Kenneth & Cindy Little's

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

7 AM Men's Bible Study (Fellowship Hall)
 7 PM Choir Practice

Saturday, February 5, 2022

Noon - 4 PM Private Event (Fellowship Hall)

Sunday, February 6, 2022

9:15 AM Breakfast (Fellowship Hall)
 10 AM Sunday School (main Sanctuary Classrooms)
 10 AM Contemporary Worship (theChapel)
 11 AM Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)

4 PM Worship Committee Meeting (Fellowship Hall)**Monday, February 7, 2022**

6 PM United Methodist Women (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

7 PM Youth Bible Study @ Kenneth & Cindy Little's

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

7 AM Men's Bible Study (Fellowship Hall)

7 PM Choir Practice

Thursday, February 10, 2022

7 PM United Methodist Men (Fellowship Hall)

Sunday, February 13, 2022

9:15 AM Breakfast (Fellowship Hall)
 10 AM Sunday School (main Sanctuary Classrooms)
 10 AM Contemporary Worship (theChapel)
 11 AM Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)
 Noon Youth After Church

Save the Date

Sunday, February 27 @ 2 PM - Sanctuary

Churchwide Meeting with District Superintendent

Tithes and Offerings can be given either online from our website or mail a check to
Union Chapel UMC Finance
P.O. Box 622, Monroe, GA 30655

Celebrations

- 1st Wendy Little
- 2nd Lana Malcom Browning
- Larry Callaway
- Justin Peters
- 3rd Jennifer Keesee
- Shaun Weaver
- 6th Stan Dial
- 7th Elaine Towler
- 8th Grant Olson
- 9th Jenny Ferguson
- Steve Sargent
- Ryan McCullers
- PJ Peters
- 10th **Billy & Gail Allen**
- 11th Kialee Melendez
- 12th Karl Olson
- 14th Frankie Malcom
- Ashley Marshall
- Ted & Rita Peters**

Anniversaries are in red

*****Administrative Information*******Church Office Hours**

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
9 AM - 2 PM

Please note, messages are not picked up during non office hours. If you have an emergency outside office hours, please call:

Pastor Ann, 770-256-4556
or James Johnson, 678-767-2712 .

******Newsletter Submissions******

Please submit any information , prayer requests or articles that you might have for the newsletter to the church office by Tuesday at noon, as the newsletter will be published on Tuesday. Also, as a reminder, please have prayer requests submitted by noon on Thursday for the Sunday bulletin. The church office email is: unionchapel@windstream.net.