



# The WINE

*The newsletter of Soddy United Methodist Church*



## **FAREWELL TO THE BEST**

As you've probably already heard, I've asked to be reappointed to another church this year. This request is NOT the result of any problems, issues, or conflicts. Rather, due to my father's declining health I need to be closer to my parents. It's a five-and-a-half hour drive from Soddy Daisy to where they live in Virginia. When the time comes for the Lord to call my father home, I'll need to be able to help out my mother. And so, in order to do that I need to be in closer proximity.

If you've been a United Methodist for more than a few years, you know that moving is part of our structure as a denomination. Pastors are appointed to a church for one year at a time. If the pastor or local church discerns it's time for a change, or if the bishop requests that a change be made, clergy in the United Methodist Church relocate to a new appointment. This is called *itinerancy* and it comes from the earliest days of the American colonies, when pastors like Francis Asbury rode circuits on horseback. When clergy are ordained each year at annual conference, we covenant to go where the bishop sends us.

As of this writing I don't know where my projected appointment will be or who will be projected to come to Soddy. We'll learn that on April 4-5 when the Pastor Parish Relations Committee chair and I receive word from

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*From Pastor Todd, continued*

the district superintendent. The PPRC chair, Art McDonald, will be able to announce the name of the projected new pastor on Sunday, April 7 (the Sunday after Easter).

I should also say that a move is not *guaranteed*. From what I hear, there are only 28 vacancies in the entire conference this year (three of those are slated to be here in the Scenic South district). Appointments are made based on the needs of pastors and churches, spiritual giftedness, salary requirements, available openings, and seniority. Since I've asked for a specific geographical region, to be closer to my parents, the reality is that there may not be anything open that fits my salary, giftedness, or the needs of a receiving congregation. If that's the case, Art and I have told the district superintendent that a return to Soddy UMC would be welcomed. At this point—as you read this—I am operating under the belief that I will move in June. We'll know for certain after Easter.

It will *not* be easy to leave you. This church has been such a blessing to Felicia and I for the past 10 years. You took us in after we'd spent five years in a harsh, toxic appointment that had just about taken everything from me. I came here broken, angry, hurt by the church, and deeply wounded by the conference. And you welcomed us in, accepted us, loved on us, gave us time and space to heal, and repeatedly demonstrated your grace, generosity, and devotion.

The church leadership stood with us when our family experienced a difficult season with our son. You showered Felicia with love, support, and hope when her mother passed away. You repeatedly asked me to return as your pastor. This has been my fourth appointment in 24 years of ministry, and it has been, without a doubt, the absolute *best* appointment I've ever experienced. That's not an exaggeration or an attempt at flattery; it's the truth. Only the years I served as a youth pastor come close to the level of satisfaction, joy, peace, and comfort I've enjoyed among you—and this church still outdistances that by a long shot!

I've said before that you probably don't realize what a wonderful gift it is to be part of a healthy church. So many congregations are divided over money, control, facilities, or leadership. So many struggle to pay the monthly bills. So many chew up and spit out pastors like a Major League Baseball player eating sunflower seeds. Too many churches are choked with cliques, with entrenched members who want to hold onto their power, or that are more concerned over saving money for a "rainy day" than with actually helping people in need.

I've seen a lot of this in previous appointments. It ruins churches, jades believers, and destroys the church's witness in the surrounding community. It's toxic and it's unhealthy. And in 10 years as your pastor,

*continued*

***From Pastor Todd, continued***

I've never seen any of that from this congregation. Not once. You have so *much* to be proud of as a church, and I thank God for it. Your next pastor will discover what I already know: that this is the best appointment in Holston Conference!

When the time comes to leave, I know I'll do so much healthier, much happier, and in a much better frame of mind than when I arrived. You've been a healing balm for Felicia and I, and I don't think we could ever repay you for your kindness, gentleness, hospitality, and love.

This will be my last newsletter for you. It will be passed off to the Communications Team, who will be responsible for deciding how best to continue communicating with the congregation.

Moving day for transitioning pastors is set for Wednesday, June 26. Your new pastor will arrive that day. My last day as your pastor will be Tuesday, June 25. When I leave I will be carrying a huge piece of Soddy United Methodist Church in my heart forever. I leave you with Paul's prayer from Ephesians 1:15-20, which is also my prayer for you:

*<sup>15</sup> Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, <sup>16</sup>I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, <sup>17</sup>asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. <sup>18</sup>I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.*

*<sup>19</sup>I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power <sup>20</sup>that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.*

Thank you, my brothers and sisters!



*How lucky I am to  
have something that  
makes saying  
goodbye so hard*

On behalf of our entire Weber family, Mitch and I want to extend our most sincere thanks to all of our extended family, neighbors, friends, and church prayer warriors for the most incredible support that has (and continues to be) poured out to us, Rebecca, Makai, and Mckenzie, our son Mathew and his family, following the horror of our son Mark's death. We have been

humbled beyond belief at all of the food, emotional support, cards, visits, calls, and ongoing prayers. And the contributions made either personally to us all or via the GoFundMe page that was set up to benefit Rebecca and children were incredible and so appreciated/needed. There are no adequate words to express our gratitude and love to each of you. The turnout at Mark's Celebration of Life spoke volumes and touched us in the center of our hearts. We are certain none of us will ever understand the "why," but we know how much comfort each of you give to us and we pray you know how much it means to us all. We truly do thank God for His provision and count on your ongoing support as we walk this impossible road. Thanks to each of you from the bottom of our hearts.

With enduring love to each of you.

~ Suzie and Mitch Weber



**Saturday,  
March 30**

# **EASTER EGG HUNT**

**2:00  
PM**

**We're in need of the following donations:**

■ **COOKIES / SNACKS** for the reception

■ **INDIVIDUALLY-WRAPPED CANDY**

(chocolate and non-chocolate)



**Please leave donations in the fellowship hall!**

**Contact Kathryn Mullins if you can help or if you have questions.**

# Upcoming Birthdays!

## March

- 8 Mitch Weber
- 9 Ken Nunley
- 15 Emily Stulce Buttrey
- 17 Art McDonald
- 26 Joseph Hendrix
- 27 Martha Bramlett
- 28 Tom Lynch



## April

- 1 Judy Teague
- 2 Robert Wood  
Kevin Jones
- 4 April Mikeal Messer  
Felicia Kingrea
- 10 Jean Wortham
- 14 Carlos Wilson
- 17 Hannah Lynch
- 21 Asher Turner
- 25 Frank Mulkey
- 26 Carla Anderson  
Fay Daughtrey
- 28 Suzanne Parrott  
Heidi Knipp

# Upcoming wedding anniversaries!

## March



## April

- 18 Steve & Jean Wortham



Scholarships to Camp Lookout are once again available to children and grandchildren of Soddy UMC members. To see program offerings and dates, go to [www.camplookout.com](http://www.camplookout.com). Once you make your decision, contact Suzie Weber at 423-595-4628 or email [tnwebers@epbfi.com](mailto:tnwebers@epbfi.com) to obtain the scholarship code.



# W E L C O M E

We're delighted to welcome the following new members to  
Soddy United Methodist Church!

PATTI DENNIS (transfer of membership from Hixson, UMC)

JUDY HORTON (transfer of membership from Signal Crest UMC)

DAVID & SANDRA WINKLES

(transfer of membership from Silverdale Cumberland Presbyterian Church)

*WELCOME, Sandra, David, Judy, and Patti!*



## Daylight Savings Time begins

Don't forget  
to set your clocks ahead  
one hour  
on Sunday, March 10



## MAUNDY THURSDAY

March 28

6:30 p.m.

**LENTEN SERMON SERIES: THE ROAD**

*"Running Out Of Road"*



# MARCH

**Sunday, March 3rd**

**THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT**  
**LENTEN SERMON SERIES:**  
**THE ROAD**  
*"The Rules Of The Road"*

**Tuesday, March 5th**

Marthas & Marys Bible study (10:00 AM)

**Wednesday, March 6th**

*Potluck dinner* (5:30 PM)

**Sunday, March 10th**

**FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**  
**LENTEN SERMON SERIES:**  
**THE ROAD**  
*"Taking The High Road"*



**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS**

**Tuesday, March 12th**

Marthas & Marys Bible study (10:00 AM)

**Thursday, March 14th**

Choir practice (6:30 PM)

**Sunday, March 17th**

**FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**  
**LENTEN SERMON SERIES:**  
**THE ROAD**

*"The Road To Hell Is Paved With Good Intentions"*

**Tuesday, March 19th**

Marthas & Marys Bible study (10:00 AM)  
*United Methodist Women* (12:00 PM)

**Thursday, March 21st**

Choir practice (6:30 PM)

**Sunday, March 24th**



**PALM SUNDAY**  
**LENTEN SERMON SERIES:**  
**THE ROAD**

*"The End Of The Road"*

**Tuesday, March 26th**

Marthas & Marys Bible study (10:00 AM)

**Thursday, March 28th**



**MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE**  
*"Running Out Of Road"*

**Saturday, March 30th**

EASTER EGG HUNT 

**Sunday, March 31st**



*Easter Sunday - choir cantata*



# April



**Tuesday, April 2nd**

Marthas & Marys Bible study (10:00 AM)

**Wednesday, April 3rd**

*Potluck dinner* (5:30 PM)

**Thursday, April 4th**

Choir practice (6:30 PM)

**Sunday, April 7th**



*"By This You Will Know That I Am The Lord"*  
~ The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ~

**Tuesday, April 9th**

Marthas & Marys Bible study (10:00 AM)

**Thursday, April 11th**

Choir practice (6:30 PM)

**Sunday, April 14th**

*"On Trial, Part I: Paul Before Felix"*  
**ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD meeting**  
(5:00 PM)

**Tuesday, April 16th**

Marthas & Marys Bible study (10:00 AM)

**Thursday, April 18th**

Choir practice (6:30 PM)

**Sunday, April 21st**

*"On Trial, Part II: Felix Before Paul"*

**Tuesday, April 23rd**

Marthas & Marys Bible study (10:00 AM)

**Thursday, April 25th**

Choir practice (6:30 PM)

**Sunday, April 28th**

*"Costly Expectations"*

**Tuesday, April 30th**

Marthas & Marys Bible study (10:00 AM)

