

# Methodist Messenger

Prague/Arlington Charge

March, 2017

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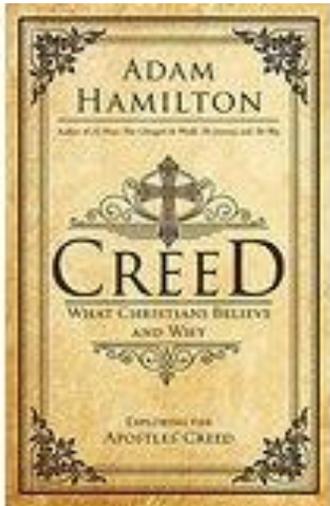
## Prague Church-Wide Time of Discovery and Planning

When I came, I planned a series of meetings in people's homes, which I called "Cottage Meetings." These were all conducted in November. The conversation and questions answered in these meetings gives me information, not only directly in answering the questions, but also in what questions remain unanswered, and which ones seemed to stump you. Since I have arrived, I have been observing the congregations, the community, and the needs of the members, as well as those who have yet to join us. I have been watching carefully how the congregation responds to ministry opportunities, and how they respond to the opportunities presented through Quest. There is no place in the church I have not looked at the way we have utilized resources, human, financial, and physical. The square footage, the way it is used, and the desires, dreams, and needs of the future of this church. All of this has kept me busy, and in constant prayer. It is important for the future of this congregation to not delay, but to look to the future.

Proverbs tells us "*The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.*" (21:5) If we want to be wise, we will plan for the future. It also says our plans may not always turn out as we thought. "*Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.*" (19:21) So, we can make our plans, but God's plans will take precedence. God's plans are better than we could ever plan for ourselves anyway, and our plans will only align with God's if we plan carefully and prayerfully.

I believe God has given us a vision for the future. It is what I, as your pastor, am charged with, carrying the vision of what the church can be and where God is leading. On Sunday, March 12<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm, we will have a church-wide meeting that all are invited to. Even if you did not take part in the cottage meetings, I would encourage you to come and join the conversation. It will be a time of discovery and visioning for the future of our church. I hope you will come to hear what will be presented, and join the conversation.

Grace for the journey of faith,  
Rev. Sonja



Children, Youth, and Adult Sunday school will be studying the book *Creed* by Adam Hamilton to go with worship series "The Creed." Join a Sunday school for Lent.

### THE CREED: WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE AND WHY

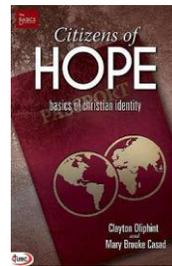
*"...in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you..."* 1 Peter 3:15

Knowing why you believe what you believe helps you give an answer and a witness to your faith. The Creed is an ancient statement of our faith that summarizes what we believe about the three persons of the trinity and the church—the statement of our faith as found in the Old and New Testament. When you are asked to explain your faith, you will understand that it is based in The Creed, or the Apostle's Creed. Many of you have recited this creed since you were a small child. When things are very familiar to us, we often recite it without even thinking about its meaning. Others of you may think it is new and strange. Whether it is old or new to you, it is powerful. The Creed outlines how we are to live our life in Christ as members of Christ's body the church.

During Lent we are given an opportunity to repent, reflect, and renew our faith. As we do so this Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday on March 1, we will explore the statement of

our faith as found in The Creed, and understanding its meaning. This worship series focuses around THE CREED: WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE AND WHY, and around the beginnings of the church.

In addition to worship, a study of the Creed, by Adam Hamilton, will be discussed in adult, youth, and children's Sunday school classes, to further our understanding. **Ash Wednesday services are March 1<sup>st</sup>, at noon and at 6:30 pm. The first Sunday of Lent is March 5<sup>th</sup>.** Join us this Lent for a study to benefit the whole family, and the family of faith. Bring those you know who may have questions, and those you know that do not know what questions to ask.



### Study during Lent

Hope. We know that hope is central to our identity as Christians and we know that supreme hope is found in a relationship with Jesus Christ, but how does that relationship become real to us? In "Citizens of Hope," a book and four-week small-group study, you'll be guided on a formative path of understanding who God is and who you are as God's children. The four week study **starts March 19<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm.** Books are \$12



### UNITED METHODIST MEN

Information from member Jack Vaughan  
The UMM met Saturday, February Jack presided and Rick Martin presented the devotional "Invitation to Transforming Mystery."

The **next meeting** date will be **March 4**, in the Prague Fellowship Hall and all interested men and boys are invited to participate.

A **potato bar** is scheduled for **March 5**.



## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The UMW met Thursday, February 9, with Pres. Lisa Hefner presiding. An amazing amount of business was worked out in a relatively short time.

Kolache baking plans included committee assignments, information sharing, "stone soup" for lunch, and encouraging input from most of the dozen ladies gathered.

Final plans were laid for UMW Sunday, February 26. Lisa emailed a basic order of worship before the meeting, so all we had to do was flesh it out.

Charlotte Fouquet provided refreshments and Lisa provided additional food, resulting in a delightful feed for everyone.

**The next UMW meeting will be March 9, 6 pm**, in the Prague Fellowship Hall. All interested women and girls are invited to attend.



How much was raised for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) through our special offerings through Rev. Sonja's sermon series? Would you believe \$1702.97? Believe! Fantastic!



Winter Jam 2017 will be in OKC on April 1<sup>st</sup>. See Tina to sign up.



united methodist youth fellowship

## UNITED METHODIST YOUTH

Written by Youth Team Leader

Tina Thompson



I love the support that the youth get from our church! As most of you know, Sara Martin has been called to the ministry and will start college in the fall. She has already preached many times and our own churches got to enjoy her message in February. The main focus of her message was as follows: "the main purpose of Jesus' teaching is to love. Love overcomes, love prevails. Love is patient and kind. It's a calling, to live more like Jesus, to love more like Jesus." She encouraged us to love everyone, not just those that are easy to love.

## MID-WINTER RETREAT

Written by Youth

Leslie Clark



from left...John D Neal, Kasey McKee, Leslie Clark, Maddie Dean, Maggie Neu, Carlton Bond, Madalyne Lloyd, Lauren Hackworth, Yasmine Joes, Gage Powell, Riley Waltonbaugh & Tina Thompson.

At mid-winter retreat the theme was "The Move-stepping from Passion to Purpose." We discussed topics that are uncomfortable for a lot of people. We talked about things such as racism, sexism, human trafficking, developing

countries growing in the technological world, water relief, and world hunger. I attended the class on racism and the water relief. In the racism class, we talked about the belief that these things are not happening in today's society, but the truth is it has just gotten worse. Over time, the racism has just been avoided because we all get caught up in our everyday actions. Then in the water relief class, we discussed how there so many people in third world countries that can't get clean water because of their circumstances. Then we were told that as people in the new world we need to not only help, but show the people in the developing countries how to fend for themselves in a way. The motive of the camp as you can see from the topics, was all about finding ourselves and figuring out what we are passionate about. We discussed topics, that people too often say someone else will take care of, and we discussed how we need to be those people who are taking action.

### **WESLEY'S FINANCIAL ADVICE**

**Written by Member**

**Sara Martin**

Earn. Save. Give.: Wesley's Simple Rules

For Money By James A. Harnish

"Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can." – John Wesley

The Youth learned about John Wesley's financial teachings during a four-lesson Sunday school study. He had three simple but powerful rules: earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can. The author guides readers through questions and issues that young people have about money and its use in Christian life.

We challenged clichés like "Money is the root of all evil," and learned healthy financial practices. John Wesley is an example of the servanthood life. He both preached on finances and lived by example.

Wesley had written, in 1774 "[When I die] if I leave behind me ten pounds . . . You and all mankind [may] bear witness against me, that I have lived and died a thief and a robber." In fact, when he died in 1791, the only money mentioned in his will was a few

coins. What had happened to the rest of his money? It is thought that the estimated thirty thousand pounds he had earned over his lifetime had been given away. How incredible is that? Wesley believed ten percent was a great starting place for tithing, and as your salary increases, the percent increases as well.

### **Curriculum on Wesley's Financial Rules:**

Tina's note: Sara wrote an article about our "Earn, Save, Give" curriculum that we have been studying in Sunday School. Following are parables that were written in a current day setting.

#### **THE PARABLE of the RICH FOOL**

current day parable based on Luke 12:13-21

**written by Leslie Clark & Kasey McKee**

A man went to a bank and asked a banker how to evenly divide his money. The banker said, "Don't ask that of me. Deal with it yourself. Stop hoarding money or you'll miss the joys of life. The life of a rich man revolves around money, and how would you feel if you had no money? I will put down my earnings before you and show you how to be smart." So it is with those who get money just to serve themselves, but are not rich towards God.

#### **THE PARABLE of RESOURCES**

current day parable on Matthew 25:14-30

**written by Wanda Clark & Logan Wanzer**

A man was going on a business trip, so he gathered his children and gave them some of his money to protect. To his oldest, a son, he gave \$10, to his middle child, a daughter, \$5 and to his youngest, a son, \$1. The oldest went and bought the tools necessary to wash cars and worked until he doubled his money to \$20. The middle one spent money to open a one-day lemonade stand to double her profits to \$10, but the youngest was scared of failing, so he hid his dollar under the mattress. When the father returned, he was happy to see his two oldest were taking initiative in their lives, but rather upset at his younger son's meekness in hard work. So he took away the younger son's dollar and gave him a job at his business to learn the importance of diligence.



This quarter's noisy offering is going to UMCOR! They are a ministry through the UMC that provides humanitarian relief when war, conflict, or natural disaster disrupt life to such an extent, that communities are unable to recover on their own.



The youth line up for plates to serve...



**SARA MARTIN & DIANA KINZEY**

Following Sara's sermon on March 19, Diana Kinzey participated in the service by singing with a fantastic video called "Creation Song." Diana frequently graces the chancel with her vocal selections, frequently with video backup. Thank you, Diana, for your faithful service to Prague UMC.



...and faithful supporters enjoy food & fellowship!

**VALENTINE DAY DINNER**

A near-full house welcomed Eric's pork loin and the effort of many hands to produce a lovely dinner. Barbara Holman and friends decorated the Prague Fellowship Hall. Funds raised went to this year's Youth Force mission trip.



**YES! OUR UMW IS HARD AT IT! 2017 KOLACHE FILLINGS ARE IN PROGRESS!  
GO GALS – AND ALL THE GUYS & YOUTH & KIDS THAT HELP!**



Written by Children's Coordinator Melinda Pruett



We have been having lots of fun this past month learning about the Last Supper and Holy Communion. The kids enjoyed smashing grapes with their fingers and making juice. We just started a new lesson on baptism. They got the chance to paint John the Baptist in the Jordan River with Jesus. We have lots of fun and on Wednesday nights, we are growing in the Children's area and in the Youth. If you want to see how God is working in our church, come on Wednesday night. If you have a calling to come help us on Wednesday night we can use the help. Also started working on Vacation Bible School. I know it seems early, but it will be here before you know it. I still have some market place spots open, if you want to come help. VBS is June 4th - 8<sup>th</sup>, in the evening. Also there is only a month left to get camp forms in to me or Tina.

Thank you, Melinda



Written by Director Barbara Holman

If you enjoy music and drama, please join us in preparing our special presentation of "Amazing Lov." This musical drama will connect your heart and renew your spirit with the true sense of Easter. Not only will we be rehearsing on Wednesday evenings, but music scripts and CD rehearsal practice tracks in your voice classification will be available for individual practice on your own. So, please come and join us!!!!



## SIGN LANGUAGE

Written by Director Rev. Sharon Capron

The children's sign language class has been busy! In spite of attendance that varies from two to six children on any one Wednesday afternoon, the group has managed to sign at both churches in February and are already at work on two songs for another presentation next month, praising God in sign!



### Chapel similar to what is hoped for John Lilley Correctional Center

It's Wednesday night and 120+ men are lined up for an inmate-led worship service. The chapel can legally hold 85. The last ones in line are turned away. ALL classes and worship services must meet either in the chapel or in a 16-seat adjoining classroom. My two sign classes meet at either end of the chapel, while another class meets in the little room. Sometimes my classes are bumped when higher priority classes or officials need the space.

The proposed new chapel (200-seat sanctuary, 6 classrooms, 2 offices, 2 restrooms, plus furniture and electronics) still lacks \$100,000 in funding. Volunteer groups have been challenged to raise \$5000 each to meet the need. Reese and I have accepted the challenge.

Four ways you may help: 1. Write the church a check with "Lilley Chapel" in the memo line. 2. Visit [GoFundMe.com/p/w327x](http://GoFundMe.com/p/w327x). 3. Sponsor me so-much-per-mile on my very first century (100 miles in 1 day) bicycle ride to Ada and back. (Date TBA. The sponsor sheet is not yet out.) 4. Pray.

- God's grace, Sharon

# MARCH

## Wednesday, March 01

11 am Arlington Ladies Day Out  
noon ASH WED. SERVICE  
5:30 - 7:30 pm Quest  
6:30 pm ASH WED. SERVICE

## Thursday, March 02

## Friday, March 03

6 - 7 pm AA & AI-Anon  
BD Doris Huff  
BD Stanley Kolar  
WA James & Charlene Jezek  
WA Robert & Tonya Clark

## Saturday, March 04

7am United Methodist Men

## Sunday, March 05

Worship/Sunday school - Arlington  
Sunday school/worship - Prague  
"The Creed" study begins  
POTATO BAR

## Monday, March 06

BD Sandra Sue Dukes

## Tuesday, March 07

6 - 7 pm AA & AI-Anon  
BD Leah Carver

## Wednesday, March 08

11 am Arlington Ladies Day Out  
5:30-7:30 *Quest*  
6:30 vocal choir

## Thursday, March 09

6 pm United Methodist Women

## Friday, March 10

6 - 7 pm AA & AI-Anon  
BD Alice Largent

## Saturday, March 11

BD Kathy Eby  
BD Preston Fridrich

## Sunday, March 12

Worship/Sunday school - Arlington  
Sunday school/worship - Prague  
**5pm PRAGUE CHURCH-WIDE  
Discovery/Planning meeting**

## Monday, March 13

WA Aaron & Genise Fridrich

## Tuesday, March 14

6 - 7 pm AA & AI-Anon

## Wednesday, March 15

11 am Arlington Ladies Day Out  
5:30-7:30 *Quest*  
6:30 vocal choir

## Thursday, March 16

## Friday, March 17

6 - 7 pm AA & AI-Anon

## Saturday, March 18

## Sunday, March 19

Worship/Sunday school - Arlington  
Sunday school/worship - Prague  
2pm "Citizens of Hope"  
study begins  
BD Dick Wilkerson  
BD Linda Poteet

## Monday, March 20

BD Rose Vaughan

## Tuesday, March 21

6 - 7 pm AA & AI-Anon  
BD Ola Bon Fouquet  
BD Gary Kinslow

## Wednesday, March 22

11 am Arlington Ladies Day Out  
5:30-7:30 *Quest*  
6:30 vocal choir  
BD Kristen Hamm

## Thursday, March 23

## Friday, March 24

6 - 7 pm AA & AI-Anon  
BD Riley Waltonbaugh

## Saturday, March 25

## Sunday, March 26

Worship/Sunday school - Arlington  
Sunday school/worship - Prague  
2pm "Hope" study  
BD Dillon Good

## Monday, March 27

BD Banks Weeks

## Tuesday, March 28

6 - 7 pm AA & AI-Anon  
BD Carrie Good

BD = birthday

WA = wedding anniversary

## APRIL DATES

April 1, Saturday

Winter Jam

April 2 & 9, 2 pm Sundays  
"Citizens of Hope" study

April 9, 6 pm Palm Sunday  
Community service  
First Baptist Church

April 12, 5:30 - 7:30 pm  
Quest Easter egg hunt

April 13, Holy Thursday

April 14, Good Friday

April 16, EASTER

April 22 & 29  
Kolache baking days