



MAY, 2025

The Epistle

A newsletter for the community of
St. Paul's United Methodist Church

A Word from Rev. Ron

There Ain't Nothing Particular About a Methodist

I am not a fan of beer or wine. Before you judge me for that, know that I've tried numerous variations of both, both here in the States and even while teaching with DODDS in Germany. It just turns out that I find the taste of all wine and beer generally unappealing. (That said, I can readily enjoy a mojito or a Moscow mule. Were I to have admitted such as a Methodist a hundred years ago, I'd probably have been railroaded out of the church!)

If you weren't aware of this, Methodists have a history of being understood as teetotalers, particularly as presented in early 19th century America. Methodists were advocates and leaders in both the temperance and prohibition movements in America in the 19th and early 20th Century. These actions were rooted in an understanding of our movement's stance against alcohol.

Except that, surprise!, founder of Methodism John Wesley wasn't exactly anti-alcohol. Now, sure, both drunkenness and "spirituous liquors" were discouraged in the movement and its rules from its earliest days; but wine and beer wouldn't have been included in the original definition. The prohibition against alcohol in our movement's history was a response to the gin craze of the early 1700s.

Gin was introduced to England toward the end of the 17th century, and by the 1730s there was a "gin craze" as it was being produced and sold by a great number of small operations throughout the country.

Gin was held by politicians and leaders to be responsible for increased crime in the country. A couple famous prints by artist William Hogarth in 1751, *Gin Lane* and *Beer Street*, sought to depict the "evils" of gin and the general benevolence of beer.

The problem was of their own making, in some ways. Encouraging the production of gin helped to raise the cost of grain, whose prices had plummeted in years prior. With the production of so much gin, grain prices went up and the economy benefitted.

Only, not everyone did. And that is exactly why and where John Wesley became an advocate against gin and other "spirituous liquors." Wesley wasn't against gin or distilled liquor because of the evils they created (though he would, of course, critique such evils). No, Wesley was against the economics of the situation: gin distillation resulted in the raised price of grain but also used a great deal of grain, with the unintended consequence that the poor were further impoverished and unable to afford food while an increasingly shrinking number benefited from the creation and sale of gin.

So, in Wesley's day, beer and wine were acceptable but spirituous liquor was not, and the original reasons for this distinction were rooted in care for the poor. Let me repeat that: whatever became of their origin in transmission over the years, the early Methodist's admonitions against spirituous liquor were rooted in their concern for the poor.

There's an important point I want to get at here: Motivations matter.

Ultimately that's where Methodism starts and ends, with a motivation: Methodists desire to "love God" and "love neighbor." That is our founding motivation, after the example set by Jesus and shared in Wesley's day with a society yearning to rediscover it. For Wesley, crusading against gin was a way to love neighbor because of the love of God. By helping to limit the reach and success of gin, Wesley and our Methodist forebears were seeking to lessen the price of grain and free it, again, for food for the poor.

This is the character of a Methodist, then and now – there ain't nothing particular about a Methodist from any other person who is honestly, earnestly seeking to know and follow God in their own lives and then following that great command Jesus gave us, to love God and love neighbor.

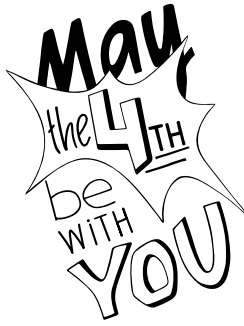
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What's Coming In Worship in May

Sunday, May 4

May the Fourth Be With You

The unofficial "Star Wars holiday" falls on a Sunday, so you can anticipate Rev. Ron will have something to say about it!



Sunday, May 18

Recognition of 2025 Graduates

On Sunday, May 18, we will recognize those who are graduating high school, college, or from other programs.



Sunday, May 11

Mothers Day and Confirmation

On May 11 we will celebrate Mother's Day in all three services. In addition, we will celebrate the confirmation of three youth at our 9:30am service.



Sunday, May 25

Memorial Day Sunday

"All gave some, some gave all." As part of our Memorial Day worship we will take a moment to remember and commemorate those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense & service.

**Mark your calendar now
for our Summer Worship
Schedule:**

In June and July we will go down to just two services each week. Join us for **Traditional Worship at 8:30am** or our **Contemporary Service at 10:00am**.



Half Page Financial Summary

With the end of March we have completed the first quarter of the church's fiscal year and the third quarter of the preschool's. Here are financial summaries of our church's different financial situations year-to-date (YTD).

Church Operations & YTD Figures

2025 Budget

Income: \$712,000
Expenses: \$802,160
Surplus / (Deficit): (\$90,160)

YTD (Qtr01) 2025

Income: \$222,591
Expenses: \$184,097
Surplus / (Deficit): \$38,494

Current Year End Projection

Income: \$ 748,000
Expenses: \$802,160
Surplus / (Deficit): (\$54,160)

Preschool Budget & YTD Financials

2024-25 Budget

Income: \$67,875
Expenses: \$93,684
Surplus / (Deficit): (\$25,809)

YTD (Qtr03) 2024-25

Income: \$58,844
Expenses: \$66,886
Surplus / (Deficit): (\$8,042)

The Preschool staff and Board are aware that operations are currently at a deficit and are exploring how to improve sustainability. In the mean time, they have a reserve that allows them to continue operating for a couple of years.

"Retire the Debt... Re-Floor the Gym" special gifts

Retire the Debt

Goal: \$250,000
Committed: \$205,983

We are thrilled to share that we are only about \$10,000 away from paying the mortgage in full! Thank you for your generous commitments. Please keep them coming! (Note that our goal was set prior to some normal payments being made. Excess funds will go toward the gym floor.) Paying the mortgage may erase our projected deficit for 2025.

Re-Floor the Gym

Goal: \$150,000
Committed: \$46,583

CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES



We need people with a heart for Jesus and children!

We are starting a new curriculum in the fall (see below) and are looking for some new teachers to add in to our Sunday school rotation. Each Sunday's lesson is compiled for leaders to teach from their strengths and intentionally developed to reach the heart of every child. We are looking for people to serve with 3-5 year-olds, kindergarten - 2nd graders, and 3rd-5th graders. Leader training will be in August. Talk to Heather to discover how YOU can grow the kingdom of God!



Our new interactive/hands-on adventure in Sunday School in August! Come join us! There will be more games, stories, snacks, crafts and science than ever before!

Our last Sunday School for the 2024-2025 school year will be Sunday, May 25th.

Thank you teachers for a wonderful year! Enjoy your break! **YOU** make a difference in the hearts of the families of St. Paul's!

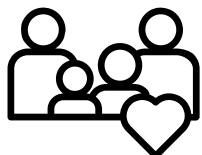


Mother/Daughter Tea Party Saturday, May 3rd, 2 - 4 pm in Brummet Hall

We have just a few single spots (one space at the table) left for our Tea in May! We've love to welcome those who would like to attend but have no relative or friend in town with whom to attend. Please let Heather know as soon as possible if you would like to attend in this capacity!



Save the date
for our next
Family Worship
Service
**Sunday, June
29th at 9:30 am**



Contact Heather Stein for information on Children and Family Ministries or any events on this page. 520-296-6149 or FamilyMinistries@StPaulsUMCTucson.net



Shared Youth Ministry Update: [Belong - Believe - Serve](#)

[April events: Here's a quick look at what we experienced together.](#)

- **March 30 – Confirmation Class & Sabino Canyon Hike:** Students explored what it means to be a Christian during Confirmation Class #3 with Pastor Beth, using Bible stories, discussions, and poster-making, then enjoyed a guided hike at Sabino Canyon where they learned about desert plants and wildlife while reflecting on God's creation.
- **April 6 – Reflecting on Lent and the Cross:** Youth explored the question “What does the cross mean today?” through a BibleProject video, reflection questions, and a hands-on “stone in my shoe” activity, followed by writing Lenten commitments on a large cross and ending with games and fellowship in the gym.
- **April 13 – XL Clue IRL at St. Mark's UMC:** Our youth met and teamed up with youth from other United Methodist churches to play CLUE IRL, a live-action mystery game where they interviewed characters, gathered clues, and worked together to solve a classic whodunit using teamwork and critical thinking.
- **April 18 – Good Friday Service Project:** We supported Gospel Rescue Mission's Easter Blessings event by helping at the children's bounce house and serving families



[Upcoming in May: We have a meaningful month ahead and hope your youth will join us!](#)

- **April 27 – Highland Vista Park Pool Party:** We'll close April with swimming, volleyball, and fun at Highland Vista Park as youth connect and enjoy time together.
- **May 4 - Jumping Cholla Trampoline Park:** Youth will enjoy an active afternoon of jumping, dodgeball, and fun challenges together at Jumping Cholla.
- **May 11 - Echo the Story Large Group Discussion (Sunday School Curriculum):** Youth will explore Bible stories through creative reflection and group discussions.
- **May 18 - Service Project - Visiting Fellowship Square (Adopted Grandparent).**
- **May 25 – End-of-year cooking party at Desert Skies:** To celebrate the end of the school year, we will gather for a fun evening of cooking, sharing food, playing optional games, and enjoying time together.
- **May 30–June 1 – Camping 101 at Mt. Lemmon:** A 24-hour outdoor adventure at Rose Canyon Lake with hiking, hands-on activities, a bonfire devotional, and worship under the stars.
- **May 11 & 18 – Confirmation Sunday:** Youth will be confirmed at their home churches—St. Paul's on May 11, and Christ Church and Desert Skies on May 18—as they take this important step in their faith journey.

St. Paul's Pet Ministry

PETS NEED PRAYERS TOO

School Supply Drive

St. Paul's has been collecting school supplies for the last 24 years for our three partner schools and we will continue to do so this year. Beginning on July 13th, there will be a collection box in the Narthex for school supplies collection. We will finish our collection on Aug. 3rd. We will deliver to Henry Elementary School and Dietz K8 Elementary School in Tucson and to Robles Elementary at Three Points on August 5th. The principals and liaisons at each school are so grateful for all that our congregation does for their students and families.

If you chose, you can order through Amazon and have some school supplies sent to St. Paul's or make a financial donation if you prefer. Thank you for caring for our school families and any church family that might need supplies. Any questions can be directed to Genita Salvagio 520-404-2123 and Cheryl Smith 520-205-1667. Thank you again.

St. Paul's 2025 Pet Blessing Invitation

Greetings from the Pet Ministry Team! We are hosting a Pet Blessing April 27th at 2:00 PM and YOU are invited! Please bring your leashed or crated pet (or a picture of your pet) to the St Paul's UMC Courtyard (just outside Brummet Hall). Shirley Maddox and Kristin Rhodes will give Blessings to each animal companion, and we will have a small bag of treats for your pet.

The Pet Ministry is made up of a team of caring people just like you. Our Mission is to serve animals and the people who love them, both in our congregation and community, in order to engage in the ministry of showing God's love inclusively to all people. Visitors and new members are always welcome if interested in taking part in this ministry. If so, please email St. Paul's UMC at spumc@stpaulsumctucson.net.

Services the Pet Ministry offers include providing dog and cat food in the Food Pantry for our community, Card and Prayer Ministry for people who are celebrating a pet's birthday or the arrival of a new animal companion, or experiencing the loss or illness of their pet.

If Pet Ministry has touched your life, please let us know. We welcome input for reaching out to the community, too. You are always welcome to contact us at spumc@stpaulsumctucson.net.



What have you learned?

On March 30, 2025, Rev Ron preached about wisdom and asked for nuggets of wisdom from the congregation. Below are selected pieces. We received so many that we were not able to showcase all of them.

(While) going through a divorce that I didn't know was coming, I felt much closer in my relationship with Jesus even though he was always a part of my life and as the 9 months of going through all the changes, I realized it was the best thing that happened to me. St. Paul's was a major influence in my changes because of the old singles group back in Bob Deits' office.

Death of mother, then brother, then step-son led to total sadness and reordering of priorities. Divorce led to total loss and devastation, and shame. Receiving the Holy Spirit led to renewing, awakening, and rebirth.

Keep your faith growing, your prayers will be answered.

Having to rely on God completely to help me be there for my husband through the 5 years of his cancer and to see small miracles.

When I had my first cancer, I knew God was always with me in the past. He was with me then, why wouldn't he be with me every day to come. He is always with me even when I screw up.

It took me 35 years to realize that when my mom was dying of cancer, it was pure selfishness on my part to want my mom to keep on living when she had lost her quality of life. When there is no more hope, to change your prayer for God to please bring them home to heaven where there is no more pain or suffering.

Through loss of loved ones, young and old, I have learned that even in great grief we will find joy, forgiveness, new beginnings and our strength.

When I was 19, a coworker and friend drowned in the Gila River. I resolved then to always tell people that I love them, since the opportunity to do so may be taken away at any time.

Through many times of witnessing God's faithfulness, I have learned to trust God more and more with all parts of my life.

People are flawed and wonderful too. God is wonderful period. It helps me to know both of these facts.

When people say they are willing to help you be willing to ask them to do specific things for you when you need help.

Share your difficult times with friends and loved ones. Ask for help to deal with them. Go out into the "wilderness" and look at our beautiful world to help with acceptance and solutions.

Prayer and patience helps a lot of situations.

I learned that after a health scare, that making something bigger in my imagination made everything worse. On the advice of a friend, I changed my prayers to asking for peace.

Get involved in groups or activities that are outside of your comfort zone. Try new things! Change is hard, but sometimes you find the new thing really is better.

Learned that my parents were not perfect and so replicating them is not the best strategy.

Life is precious, spend time with loved ones.

I have learned that no matter how bad things are for me, there is always someone who has worse problems to deal with and God is there if you go to him.

I've learned that everyone goes through really hard times in their life, so comparing is not worth it. We just don't always know or hear about others' hard times. So it's not helpful to think that someone else has it better than me.

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As one leader once put it to me, a Methodist is someone who follows Jesus in the company of the Wesley brothers.

In the same century, while he was being critiqued for his enthusiastic religious movement, Wesley took his pen and set about responding to criticisms of Methodism by writing "The Character of a Methodist" (which you should have in your bulletin). Wesley makes it clear that Methodists are not defined...

- Methodists are *not* defined by opinions of any sort, for like other Christians Methodists find inspiration from the holy Scriptures and the ancient creeds. Wesley sagely then wrote, "but as to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think"
- Methodists are *not* defined by any particular words or phrases; by any unique actions or customs specific only to them, or because they place a stress on any single part of religion.

"Who [then] is a Methodist...?" Wesley asks?

*A Methodist is one who has
"the love of God shed abroad in his heart
by the Holy Ghost given unto him;"
one who "loves the Lord his God
with all his heart, and with all his soul,
and with all his mind,
and with all his strength."
God is the joy of his heart,
and the desire of his soul..."*

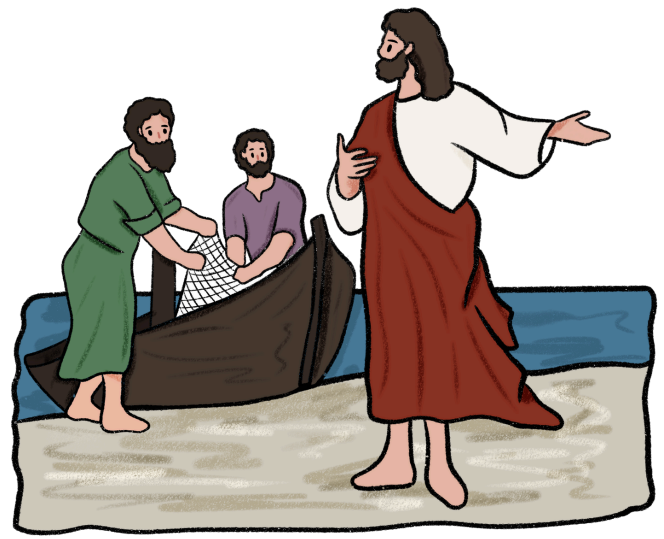
Wesley goes on in his treatise to describe a person earnestly seeking to know and love God.

That's it. We aim to follow Christ, loving God and neighbor. That's our motivation. Wesley shared that, "I, and all who follow my judgment, do vehemently refuse to be distinguished from other men, by any but the common principles of Christianity..." We share motivation with the earliest Methodists, with the earliest Christians, and with contemporaries around the globe.

Near the end of his treatise Wesley concludes:

*"Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine?
I ask no further question. If it be, give me thy
hand. For opinions, or terms, let us not
destroy the work of God. Dost thou love and
serve God? It is enough. I give thee the right
hand of fellowship..."*

Our motivation is to love and serve God. One way this was expressed was in the mission of early Methodism that we recall to this day, "to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land."



After the Resurrection, some of the disciples who knew Jesus best, disconsolate about his death, went back to what they knew best: fishing (see John 21). And when they were told where and how to catch a miraculous catch, they didn't dare ask the man on the beach who he was. They knew he was the Lord. They recognized his voice, speaking to them. They felt the implication of the encounter, a remembrance that they had not too long before been re-appointed to fish for people, rather than fish, but in their fear and uncertainty had retreated to what was comfortable.

"Do you love me?" Jesus soon asks, and Peter and the disciples must have heard the implications of the great commandment; that they were to love God, whom they knew through Jesus, and their neighbor.

"Do you love me" Jesus asks, and he reminds the disciples they have a responsibility to live after his example; not to retreat together with others like them, but to go out and be found guilty of hanging out with others of God's children that the self-righteous and well-to-do wouldn't touch with a ten foot pole.

"Do you love me," Jesus asks, and his words burn a hole into Peter's heart, because of course Peter loves Jesus, despite the fact that he denied knowing him. Despite the fact that he had failed to fully follow in Jesus' footsteps.

Friends, I love Jesus, but were he to sit me down by a campfire and ask me the questions he asks of Peter, I know I'd feel my heart burning within me. I'm not sure I love him as fully as he might have me, or as much as I wish.

Part of the great legacy of Methodism that burns within me is that it is my desire to love Jesus with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. Even so, I humbly ask God's grace to strengthen me to live in that love more fully, that like those great Methodists who have come before me. I hope to make Christ's great commandment the primary motivation in my life, and in how I treat all others. Because that's the mark of a Methodist.

See you in Church!

Bon

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May Birthdays

Sharon Jordan 05/01
Cathy Robinson 05/02
Judy Tumolo 05/03
Carol Kelly 05/04
Katie Smith 05/06
Shelia Sanford 05/07
Kenny Cargill 05/10
Carrie Hill 05/11
Barb Longo 05/12
Karen Jividen 05/15

Ally Cipra 05/16
Cindy Barger 05/18
Alan Bishop 05/20
Linda Kopp 05/21
Lauren Danloe 05/23
Linda Freitag 05/26
Glee McCauley 05/27
Barbara Neubert 05/28
Susi Rubendall 05/28
Kendra Roney 05/30