

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

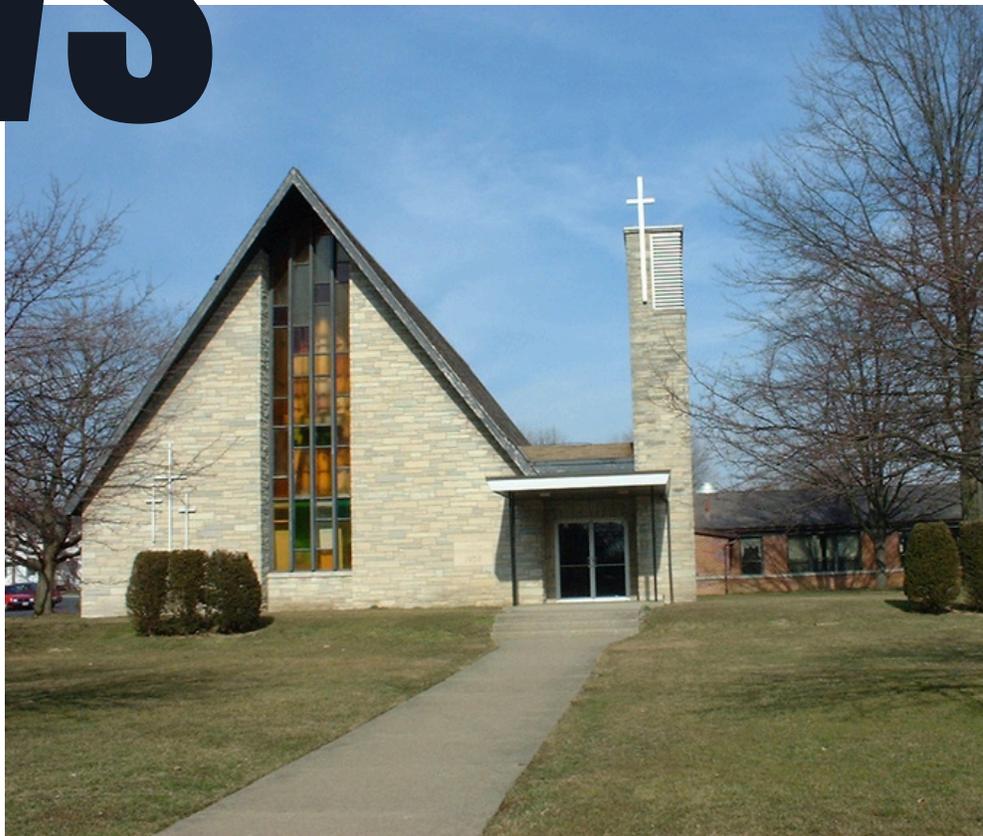
# Good News

MARCH 2026



*Smithville*  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**TO LOVE  
CHRIST  
TO SERVE  
CHRIST  
TO SHARE  
CHRIST  
NO MATTER  
WHAT IT  
TAKES**



**SMITHVILLE UMC**

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*from the desk of Pastor James*



Dear Smithville UMC,

For the months of March, April, and May, I will be heading back to the core of our belief. I will be exploring the trinity in these newsletters. Of course, there is no way I can provide a full or filled out explanation in a newsletter. This will be a few thoughts and reflections I have, by no means all encompassing. For the month of March, let us reflect on God.

We have entered Lent. Lent is a season where we are called to reflect, pray, strengthen, and nurture our relationship with God. We remember we are called to love the Lord our God and love our neighbor as ourselves. In Lent we take a season to focus on the first (first part) of this commandment(s). I have found that God is often the first of the trinity for people to talk about, but, in some ways, the hardest for people to connect with.

God, the creator of the heavens and earth. God the producer of miracles, parter of seas, the one who can produce water from rocks and mana from heaven. God, the God of our ancestors, never aging, yet forever eternal. God the essence of being, the I Am. God is so great, so cosmic and wondrous that we as humans sometimes struggle to truly connect with the Lord our God. We get so focused on all these aspects of God, that we miss what God has called us to focus on.

God created the heavens and the earth, then God created humanity. God chose to walk with us. God did not lecture Adam and Eve about the wonders of creation. What we see in scripture is God working to be in true relationship with us as humans. God heard the cry of the Hebrews and lead them out of Egypt as he called Moses. God went with them in the desert, just as God went with Abaraham through the desert.

God was with Samuel when he led the 12 tribes. God was with David when he led as King over Israel. God was with Daniel in Babylonian exile. God was with Esther as she worked to save her people. God was with Ezra as the people returned and they worked to rebuild the temple.

God has worked to always be with us, and continues to be with us today. God connected with Adam and Eve in nature and in the garden. God connected with Moses in isolation, a burning bush, in a cave alone, or a mountain top alone. God connected with Samuel in prayer at the bedside. God connected with David as David worked and was active to care for his people. God connected with Daniel through dreams and prayer. God connected with Esther through prayer and a relationship. God connected with Ezra through worship and prayer. God connected with them all through different ways. Scripture, the Bible, is full of so many ways that God worked, and continues to work, to connect with us. let us not be limited to thinking there is only one or two ways we can connect with God. God has opened, and has always opened, the pathways to relationship.

This Lent let us reflect on our relationship with God. Let us ask, in what way do I connect best with God? What activity, prayer, work, group, idea, do I feel God the best? Do I connect with God and grow my relationship when I pray at the bedside? When I am working and serving a mission or ministry? When I am visiting and sharing God's love with others? When I am singing and playing music, sharing God's love through song? When I am drawing and painting, expressing God's love through art? When I am walking in nature and with God's creation? When I am alone and able to focus and meditate on God? When I read, study, and learn the scripture and its interpretation? Is there another way not listed here that you connect with God? How are you connecting with God this Lent? How are you nurturing your relationship with the Lord?

from the desk of Pastor Aimee



1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

*<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray continually, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Have you ever had a time in your life when you felt like you saw the truth of Scripture come alive in front of you? This past weekend, my family really had the chance to watch God at work. So, this past weekend, we had to travel to southeastern North Carolina to pick up our son Aidan due to some health concerns he is having. Our trip down was picture perfect. The weather was great, the temperature was warm and it was just a smooth trip! Our trip home, however, was the polar opposite. On our way home, there was a winter storm warning in 3 of the 4 states that we would be traveling in. When we started our trip, it was windy but sunny and all was ok. We made it through North Carolina and into Virginia with no trouble. However, as we hit the first real mountain slope in Virginia, the flurries started, the wind picked up A LOT, and my car decided it had gone about as far as it cared to go... the engine light came on, it started to spit and sputter, and we slowed down – WAY down! So, the flashers went on and we prayed hard to get to the next exit....then we prayed HARDER to get across the intersection....and then even HARDER to get into a parking spot at the one hotel at that exit. As we pulled into the parking spot (at the top of a hill) my car was done.

I could go on and on about this weekend ... God was in EVERY single detail. Things that we thought were inconveniences before our trip started became answered prayers halfway through our trip. God provided through Christian friends that had family in the area where we broke down...and those family members had church family that are mechanics!

So, although we came home without my car (it apparently needs some quality time in Virginia), God provided safety through some really nasty winter weather and roads in the mountains and got us home safe and sound!

Was this trip fun ...not so much! But let me tell you, we saw God at every twist and turn of it. When we had a need, we prayed and God provided. And I don't mean in abstract ways either. There is no explanation as to why my car made it to the exit, through the intersection and up to the hotel...except that as I prayed out loud God was there with us. God provided a warm, safe, affordable room for my family, food to eat, a safe place for our car to be towed to until the mechanic and my husband can get to it, a tow truck driver that was kind and knew the area, and God's hand was really with us through the snow and the wind on the way home. Although the situation was stressful, God's faithfulness was SO CLEAR! Our Father was in every detail making a way when we couldn't see a way.

I don't share any of this for any other reason than to give God glory for being so real, so present, and so faithful! My grandparents used to tell me that we should pray about everything. They learned that from God's Word and from experiencing God through their prayer lives and God's faithfulness to them as well. What an awesome God we serve, my friends, when we can say that the Creator of all the universes and galaxies cares so intimately about each and every single one of us. He hears us! He sees us! When he says he loves us, he means it. Praise the Lord! Our God is a Good, Good Father!

*James 1:2-5*

*2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

# Offering and Attendance

## Sunday, February 1, 2026—Offering

Loose Collection .....	-0-
General Fund.....	<u>4,120.00</u>
	\$4,120.00
Items Not in General Budget:	
Building Fund .....	3800.00
Sign .....	<u>110.00</u>
	\$4,610.00
In-person Worship Service	37
ONLINE Worship Service	views 273

## Sunday, February 8, 2026 -Offering

Loose Collection .....	3.00
General Fund.....	<u>4,455.00</u>
	\$4,458.00
Sign Campaign.....	100.00
Wedding Rental .....	700.00
FH rental .....	100.00
Study books .....	12.96
Building Fund .....	<u>225.00</u>
	\$5,595.96
In-person Worship Service	46
ONLINE Worship Service	views 228

## Sunday, February 15, 2026—Offering

Loose Collection .....	-0-
General Fund.....	<u>1,350.00</u>
	1,350.00
Items Not in General Budget:	
Building Fund .....	175.00
Rental.....	300.00
Pastors' payroll.....	<u>762.50</u>
	\$2,587.50
In-person Worship Service	36
ONLINE Worship Service	views 212

## Sunday, February 22, 2026—Offering

Loose Collection .....	-0-
General Fund.....	<u>2,485.00</u>
	\$2,485.00
Items Not in General Budget:	
Building Fund .....	225.00
parsonage rent .....	500.00
from Moreland UMC.....	836.66
Lib Prep.....	3,900.00
Sign Campaign.....	50.00
Lenten study.....	5.00
Easter Flowers.....	<u>46.00</u>
	\$8,047.66
In-person Worship Service	32
ONLINE Worship Service	views 235

<b>Smithville United Methodist Church</b>					
<b>Finances at a Glance</b>					
<b>Jan 2026</b>					
	<b>Monthly Beginning Balance</b>	<b>Monthly Income</b>	<b>Rentals</b>	<b>Monthly Expenses</b>	<b>Monthly Ending Balance</b>
<b>General Fund</b>	\$ 35,869.15	\$ 13,312.12	\$ 4,300.00	\$ 15,388.98	\$ 38,092.29
<b>0 Paid of total \$20,558.00/ behind 1 Apportionment of \$1713.17</b>					
<b>Designated Accounts</b>	\$ 42,869.94	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,033.64	\$ 41,836.30
<b>Building Fund</b>	\$ 42,738.37	\$ 640.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 43,378.37

<b>Yearly Financial Summary</b>			
	<b>Actual YTD</b>	<b>Actual YTD</b>	<b>Actual YTD</b>
<b>2026 Budget</b>	<b>YTD Monthly Income</b>	<b>Usable Income -</b>	<b>Expenses</b>
<b>\$182,336.81</b>	<b>Needed for Budget</b>	<b>including rental</b>	<b></b>
	\$ 15,194.73	\$ 17,612.12	\$ 15,388.98

<b>Investments</b>	<b>Last Month</b>	<b>Net Change</b>	<b>Current Month</b>
<b>General Reserve Fund</b>	\$ 25,771.22	\$ 656.29	\$ 26,427.51
<b>Mission</b>	\$ 17,498.51	\$ 445.63	\$ 17,944.14
<b>Education Grant</b>	\$ 121,338.89	\$ 3,090.10	\$ 124,428.99
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>\$ 164,608.62</b>	<b>\$ 4,192.02</b>	<b>\$ 168,800.64</b>

**Lenten Rotation Services**  
**Sundays 4 PM**

March 1	Moreland UMC 138 Moreland Rd, Wooster, OH 44691	Pastor John Finn	How David and Jesus Dealt with Conflict? 1 Samuel 17 John 18: 1-14
March 8	Smithville UMC 243 N Milton St, Smithville OH, 44677	Pastor David Rittgers	"How David and Jesus view the Temple" 2 Samuel 7: 1-17 John 2: 13-25
March 15	New Pittsburg UMC 9670 Ashland Rd, Wooster, OH 44691	Pastor Aimee Hare	"How do we treat those who betray us?" 1 Samuel 24: 1-7 Mark 14: 1-31
March 22	Oak Chapel UMC 4203 W Old Lincoln Way, Wooster, OH 44691	Pastor James Lance	Last words of David and Jesus 2 Samuel 23: 1-7 Luke 23: 26-46
March 29	Wooster UMC 243 N Market St, Wooster OH, 44691	Rev. Kimberly Arbaugh	Preachers Choice
April 3 Friday 7pm	Oak Chapel UMC 4203 W Old Lincoln Way, Wooster, OH 44691	Good Friday Cantata	Good Friday Cantata

**Month's Events**

**Lenten Service**

Sunday, March 8 4PM

**Bishop's Visit**

Thursday, March 12 10:30 AM

**Finance**

Thursday, March 12 7PM

**Hygiene Closet**

Sunday, March 15 4 PM

**Pregnancy Care Center of Wayne County**

The Pregnancy Care Center is a faith-based, non-profit that provides alternatives to abortion and is committed to saving lives physically, spiritually, and emotionally. They want to engage, equip, and empower women to make healthy pregnancy decisions.

Pregnancy Care Center is a medical clinic with licensed medical professionals and staff. They are educating women on their choices to allow them to make informed decisions.

Smithville UMC provides monetary assistance as one of the mission organizations we have supported for years.

**Talk To Us**

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# SERMON CORNER

## March 1 Pastor James

“Who truly knew Jesus?”

John 12:1-11 and John 13:1-16

## March 8 Pastor James

“Let us pray like Jesus”

John 17:1-19 and John 18:1-14

## March 15 Pastor Aimee

“How many friends do you have?”

John 15:1-17 and John 18:28-40

## March 22 Pastor Aimee

“Darkest Before Dawn”

John 16:16-33 and John 19:1-16a

## March 29 Pastor Aimee

### Palm Sunday

“It is easier to manipulate with fear than motivate with love”

John 12:12-19 and John 19:12-27

*Happy Birthday*

March

- 1 Ryan Feller
- 3 Gary Gingery
- 5 Tim Becker
- 7 Allan Bauman
- 12 Virginia Thomas
- 17 Josh Arrington
- 18 Bryan Sayre
- 19 Kathy Buchwalter
- 20 Carissa Thompson
- 22 Francine Welty
- 25 Sharon Foy
- 26 Bryan Hartzler

*Happy Anniversary*

30 James & Eleanor Hohenshil

## On Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, Bishop Jung plans on visiting our churches.

Here is the TENTATIVE schedule for the visits:

- 8:15 to 9:00 a.m. – James Lance or Aimee Hare pick up the Bishop at his hotel in North Canton
- 9:00 to 9:15 a.m.- visit & pray at Apple Creek UMC
- 9:15 to 9:30 a.m. - travel to Moreland UMC
- 9:30 to 9:45 a.m. - visit & pray at Moreland UMC
- 9:45 to 10:15 a.m. - travel to Wooster COTC
- 10:15 to 10:30 a.m. - visit & pray at COTC UMC
- **10:30 - 10:45 a.m. - travel to Smithville UMC**
- 10:45 to 11:30 a.m. - conversation, visit and pray with all 4 churches (Apple Creek, Moreland, COTC and Smithville)

Please be sure to invite your church leadership & as many from the congregation to attend your scheduled time.

- We want to get this schedule to you now, so that each church has time to plan & invite folks to join.
- As you & your congregation prepare for the visit, please plan to respond to the following questions posed by Bishop Jung:
  1. Do they have faith?
  2. Do they have fire?
  3. Do they have fruit?



## Save The Date for Ministries at Liberty Preparatory High School

Baccalaureate - Thursday, May 21

Graduation - Friday, May 29

# HOLY WEEK

## SCHEDULE

### PASTOR JAMES

Maundy Thursday, April 2, 7 PM  
Church of the Cross

Good Friday, April 3, 7 PM  
Smithville UMC

### PASTOR AIMEE

Maundy Thursday, April 2, 7 PM  
Moreland UMC

Good Friday, April 3, 7 PM  
Oak Chapel Cantata

Easter Services  
Sunday, April 5

Pastor James  
Apple Creek & Moreland

Pastor Aimee  
COTC & Smithville

