



The Beacon

September 2026

The Newsletter of Duncan Memorial United Methodist Church
Our Mission: To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ and Share His Love



Why do United Methodists baptize babies? This may be a question that you have pondered over your lifetime. When the pastor tells you to “remember your baptism and be grateful”, how can we if we have no memory of it. As United Methodists, it is our belief that the primary actor in baptism is not us, but God. God is claiming us as His child. God is initiating us into the family of Christ. God is pouring out the Holy Spirit upon us. Our baptism is not dependent on us, but upon God.

With that being said, there comes a time where we must respond to the grace of God that has been poured out upon us. We call this moment Confirmation. Confirmation is that public profession of faith stating that we accept the grace we received at our baptism and that we commit our lives to following Christ. Baptism and Confirmation go hand and hand; we receive the gift and then we decide whether to use it or not.

Because this public profession of faith is such an important event, we often have Confirmation classes to help candidates discern what it is that they are professing. We will be starting one of these Confirmation classes soon; it will be an eight week exploration of the Bible, what we believe, and how we are called to live as Christians in the world. While there is no set age for confirmation, usually classes consist of students from 5th grade through high school. If you know someone who is interested in confirmation, please let me know as soon as possible. If you have not yet been baptized, this is an excellent opportunity to receive the gift and profess your faith all in one.

For adults interested in baptism, confirmation, or joining the church, there will be also be an upcoming Sunday School class. More information on this class will be coming within the next few weeks. As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I look forward to walking in your faith journeys with you.

Pastor Daniel

Scripture and Sermon Titles for

..... **september** 

September 6 - Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**Matthew 18:15-20*****The Power of Reconciliation*****September 13 - Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost****Exodus 14:19-31*****I've Got Your Back*****September 20 - Seventeenth after Pentecost****Matthew 6:19-24*****The Spiritual Practice of Giving*****September 27 - Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost****Mark 12:41-44*****What We Do Matters***

Duncan Memorial UMC will host the Food Bank on Friday, September 18. Help is needed on Thursday, September 17 at 1:30 p.m. to unload the Food Bank truck and begin packing. Also, help will be needed on Friday, September 18 from 8:30-10:30 a.m. to hand out food. Please come on Thursday and/or Friday if you can help out during those times.

School is back in session and Duncan will again supply weekend food bags to students. We are looking for fruit cups, Pop Tarts and snack crackers for the backpacks. Please put items in the box marked Backpack Buddies in the narthex.



Thank you so much to those of you who donated school supplies and tissues for the Clarke County Schools this year. We were able to supply all four schools with a large box of supplies and lots of tissues.

To date, we have collected 129 boxes of tissues!!! Thank you so much for your generosity!!



Just when you think it can't get any more bizarre, here's the history of one of THE most famous hymns of all time!

Vernon Spencer worked in the lead and zinc mines in Picher, Oklahoma along with his father to help provide income for their family. One day, Vernon had a terrible accident in the mine that broke his back. Unable to work at mining, he fell back on his banjo talent and began playing music at the Bucket of Blood Bar in eastern Oklahoma.

In 1931, Vernon headed to Hollywood, California, hoping to make it big. He met up with two would-be stars - Leonard Slye and Bob Nolan - and they formed a trio - The Pioneer Trio. Vernon changed his name to Tim Spencer. Leonard Slye also changed his name - to Roy Rogers (yes, THAT Roy Rogers!). They added another musician and changed their name to the Sons of the Pioneers, becoming one of the most popular country-and-western singing groups in the nation.

In 1949, Tim's song "Room Full of Roses" rose to the top of the music charts, followed by another hit, "Cigarettes, Whiskey and Wild, Wild Women". While Tim lived it up on the road, his wife Velma faithfully took their children to the Hollywood Presbyterian Church and constantly prayed for her husband. She discussed her fears with her minister of her husband not knowing Jesus. Her pastor suggested that she start writing letters to him when he was touring.

Velma started writing Tim daily, including a verse of Scripture in each one and mailing them ahead to hotels that Tim would be using in the near future. One day in 1949, Tim checked into a hotel in Hazelton, Pennsylvania. A letter from his wife waited for him. He saw the verse of Scripture and also spied a Bible on the bedside table, provided by the Gideons. Tim looked up the verse and read it in the context of his wife's letter. Intrigued, he kept reading until the Lord gripped his heart and he was led to trust Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior.

That year, Tim retired from the Sons of the Pioneers and organized a Gospel music publishing company, Manna Music.

A few years later, Tim's teenage son, Hal, attended a youth conference and a missionary from India taught the young people a new song that contained stirring words. The tune was an old Swedish melody. Hal was deeply moved and asked the evangelist for a copy of the song, saying "I think my dad can do something with this".

Tim Spencer was as impressed as his son. He contacted the author of the lyrics, Stuart Hine, and secured the rights to the song, guiding it to become one of the most beloved hymns of the 20th century.

And that's the story of how God used a Gideon Bible and the Godly prayers of a praying wife to transform the author of "Cigarettes, Whiskey and Wild, Wild Women" into the Christian who introduced the world to the hymn, HOW GREAT THOU ART.



Sept. 3	Stacey Ellis
Sept. 4	Doris Braithwaite
	Carolyn Clotzman
	Abi Moore
Sept. 7	Rev. Bill Dawson
Sept. 8	Virginia Owens
Sept. 9	Gus Luzzi
Sept. 12	Connor Duncan
Sept. 14	Joe Clotzman
Sept. 17	Jeffrey McDonald
Sept. 19	Frank Moore
Sept. 20	Joy Fiddler
Sept. 29	Terry Ellis
Sept. 30	Barbara Lawson



Upcoming Schedule:

September 20	November 15
October 4	December 13
October 18	January 10
November 1	January 24

4pm - 5pm - RISE Meeting
5pm - 5:30pm - Dinner



Milk Money

We are collecting "MILK MONEY" each week for weekly supplies of milk for local children. There is a jar located in the narthex for the collection.



Choir practice begins again on Wednesday, September 2nd at 2:00 p.m.

Thanks to our singers and musicians who provided music for the 10 a.m. service during the month of August.



The next Community Meal will be held on Thursday, September 24 from 5:00-6:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Come out and enjoy the meal and company of others.



In the Military	Our Members	Family & Friends
Richard Harris	Bob Aycock	Art Beamer
Dylan Murphy	Doris Braithwaite	Fred Carter
John Pepper	Linda Burcham	Kenny Chamblin
Triston Timbrook	Mike Clotzman	Kevin Curran
Jared Tinsman	Joy Fiddler	Diana Fogel
Tyler Tinsman	Cheyenne Fowler	Johnny Fries
	Beverly Goode	Lisa Gheen
	Eleanor Hinson	Phil Goode
	Jean Hinson	Faith Kinney
	Jeanne Hudson	Stephanie Moore
Shut-ins	Len Lawson	Toni O'Conner
*Audrey Hudson	Erin McDonald	Lisa Perkins
*Alice Mansfield	Robyn McGrath	Drew Pinilla
*Cindy Morin	Kaia Meyer	James Preston (JP) Puryear
*Nursing home or Assisted-Living home	Debra Neises	Randy Reno
	Adam Owens	Jeff Rosenberry
	Cinnamon Owens	Gina Sutherlin
	Steve Stephens	Ann Varley
Families Grieving	Ellen Wilcox	John Young
	Tim Wilcox	Pat Wince
	Debbie Zimmerman	Joe, Jacob & Taylor

Please be in prayer for our church, our employees, our community, our state, our nation, and one another. In times of peril, God's people have spent time in prayer and fasting to seek divine favor for healing.



Last month I attended National Night Out in Berryville (where I very much enjoyed free pizza and spring rolls, courtesy of Taste of the Philippines). As is my custom, I interviewed the police chief and the sheriff. I asked the usual question, which is, what issues are keeping them both up at night?

They both said pretty much the same thing. Traffic (can't do much about that), young children speeding on e-bikes and e-scooters (at least one child has died in Fairfax County after being struck by a car) and fraud, in all its ugly forms (online, telephone and mail).

So why am I addressing fraud as a health issue? You already know the answer. But before I forget, here are some important phone numbers: 1-800-723-1615 (this is the one for reporting fraud in Virginia); 1-800-MEDICARE or 1-800-633-4227 (for reporting Medicare fraud, which is on the rise); 1-800-269-0271 (which is for fraud in Social Security). I have already reported one incident in which my Medicare account was charged for some DME (durable medical equipment) that I neither received nor needed.

So, say you have worked very hard, all your life, and you are careful with your spending. Then somebody sends you an e-mail, a phone message, a letter, and before you know it you have been duped into losing a sizable chunk of your savings. When this happens to some people they literally go through the five stages of grief. If they have family members who are less than charitable they might have to listen to "You should have KNOWN better" etc. Talk about causing more pain. I have a good friend whose church congregation was victimized by a predator who claimed to be a legitimate preacher. The church's bank account was nearly emptied out. My friend has lost a lot of sleep and has had to see a gastroenterologist for possible ulcers. I have prayed very hard for forgiveness toward that man, who has since vanished.

The important thing is that if you have any doubt at all about the source of the e-mail, etc, do not open it. If you have been defrauded then please practice self-care. See your provider and tell them everything that happened, and what it's doing to you physically, mentally and emotionally. I have yet to meet a person who lost money like this and was not angry afterwards. Remember that Jesus became angry; too. (But please don't start flipping tables). If you need therapy or counseling, get it. You are not stupid, foolish, or inadequate. God sees everything, and He will provide for you what the enemy has stolen. Keep your eyes not on your checkbook, but on the Cross.

Judy Melton



Wee Angels Learning Center

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” — Isaiah 43:19

Welcoming a New Season

September brings the gift of new beginnings. As summer's relaxed days give way to crisp mornings, familiar schedules, and classroom routines, our preschool children are beginning a fresh season of learning and growth. Some children will return with excitement, while others may need extra time and reassurance. Both responses are natural. In every new step, we trust that God is already at work—making a way, surrounding our children with love, and helping them grow in courage.

Our faith-based preschool is more than a place to learn letters, numbers, songs, and stories. It is a community where children are reminded that they are wonderfully made, deeply loved by God, and never alone. Through prayer, play, worship, friendship, and caring guidance, we will help each child feel safe and ready to learn.

Helping Children Return to Routine

Young children thrive when their days are predictable and the adults around them work together. A gentle rhythm at home and school can make the transition from summer to fall feel manageable and secure.

- Rebuild the schedule gradually. Keep bedtime, wake-up time, meals, and morning preparations as consistent as possible
- Prepare the night before. Choose clothes, pack the backpack, and gather needed items to create a calmer morning.
- Allow time for rest. Returning to a busy classroom can be tiring; quiet evenings and an earlier bedtime can help children recharge.

As we welcome fall, may our preschool community embrace each new beginning with faith. Thank you, parents and caregivers, for trusting us to nurture your children. Thank you, teachers, for offering steady hands, open hearts, and joyful classrooms. We look forward to a September filled with discovery, friendship, and reminders of God's faithful love.

Colette Lambert - Center Director





Leadership & Staff

Pastor

Rev. Daniel Wray

Administrative Assistant

Brenda Elsea

Directors of Christian Formation

for Children/Youth

Frank & Stephanie Moore

Director of Music

John Hudson

Audio/Visual

Claire Luzzi

Sexton

Fiona Glynn

Nursery Attendant

Lee Campbell

Administrative Council

Chairperson

Glen Hetzel

Lay Leader

Chris Shipe

Nurture

Sheryl Reid

Outreach & Missions

Sheila Stephens

Worship

Mildred Keating

John Hudson

Congregational Care Team

Cheyenne Fowler-Leader

Sheryl Reid-Leader

Trudy Gheen

Beverly Goode

Wee Angels Daycare

Administrator

Colette Lambert



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Rest for the Soul

Studies show many Americans don't get enough sleep, and the effects can take a toll on both body and mind. Whether it's a packed schedule or restless nights, a lack of rest makes it harder to think clearly, stay focused and care for our overall well-being. Over time, that constant fatigue begins to wear us down.

Our spiritual lives follow a similar rhythm. When we rush from one task to the next without pausing to spend time with God, we can feel just as drained. We need consistent, quiet moments with Him to stay grounded, encouraged and strong in our faith.

Even Jesus made space for this kind of rest. Luke 5:16 tells us that He often withdrew to quiet places to pray. If He needed that time with the Father, how much more do we? When we step away from the noise and listen for God's voice, we find the renewal our souls have been longing for.