

# The Springs

Rev. Don Tabberer



## Life among the Believers

*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were*

*being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."* (Acts 2:43-47)

The Book of Acts is arguably one of the most interesting and important sections of the New Testament. The verses I've selected today are significant because they give us the **four characteristics of a healthy church**. These are the four things the early converts prioritized that mark the fruit of genuine conversion and life in Christ.

**The Apostles' Teaching:** That's easy for us; we have their teaching in the gospels. Jesus' followers wrote the gospels for future generations to be able to hear the teachings that they heard. We must realize, however, that the apostles and the early church were not yet mature in their faith. They did not fully understand that Jews and Gentiles were to come together in the name of Jesus; they weren't sure how to mix Gentile customs with Jewish Law. They had a lot to learn. But, they believed the teaching to be authoritative due to its authentication of God through miraculous signs and wonders.

**Fellowship:** The word Luke uses for "fellowship" has a much broader meaning than what we usually consider; it is much more than a gathering for food and chatter. Fellowship for Luke meant "joint participation" or "sharing something in common." It is thus a kind of partnership; it is a sharing together in ministry. The most common expression of "fellowship" in the New Testament is that of sharing financial resources – giving. The early converts sold everything and held their resources in common. This is not a prescription for all people in all times. Rather, it is the idea that the resources we've been given, that we have accumulated, do not belong to us without condition. God expects us to show evidence of God's work in our hearts by sharing what we have with those who have less. Giving to the church, as an example, is not

about funding the annual budget, it is about obeying God's command to contribute to the needs of the saints and pursue hospitality. Stewardship is obedience.

**The Breaking of the Bread:** We often assume that Luke is talking about Holy Communion here. While that is certainly something we must do as Christians, Luke has other ideas as well. He does not appear to be calling attention to the remembrance of our Lord's death, as much as to the simple sharing of a meal with fellow believers. We should recall that in the New Testament the Lord's Table was celebrated as part of a meal. The sharing of a meal was perhaps the most intimate form of fellowship one could have with fellow believers. It was a sharing of yourself and your resources; it was obedience to the ancient laws of hospitality; it was an image of your relationship with God.

**The Prayers:** I am inclined to think that Luke is telling us that in the very early days the converts in Jerusalem diligently persisted in the observance of the stipulated times of Jewish prayer at the temple. These were newly-saved Jewish believers who were just beginning to grasp the significance of the things they had done as Old Testament Jews, and how that related to their new belief. This was an immature church seeking its appropriate place in the world. Nonetheless, we must pray.

Now, what I do not want us to do is to view this as a "To-Do" list for our church. It is not just about doing the right things, it is more about having the right attitudes, having the right heart, and maintaining right relationships. Luke wanted us to see **why** the early church did these things. The characteristics described here are corporate activities, things the church did **together**. The competitive "me first" of the apostles is gone; these new believers are generous and not claiming anything as their own. They dispose of their personal property to care for each other. This is not just togetherness, it is **unity**. It is not just human affection, this is genuine **love**. A New Testament church is a church where the fruits of the Spirit are as evident as the manifestations of God's power. That is the kind of church we desire to be.

Seeking our healthiest church,  
*Pastor Don*



Mark your calendars!! Boo on Broadway is Sunday, October 28th, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. in downtown Sand Springs. The event is sponsored by the Sand Springs Ministerial Alliance. Businesses, churches, and community organizations are invited to set up a booth and be part of this fun day in our city. There will also be a Trunk or Treat area for those interested. Last year's event was a huge success and SSUMC will once again be participating. We need **YOUR** help! Like last year, we'll have a booth with a craft and a game and we'll need volunteers. You can volunteer for the entire afternoon or just an hour or so. This year we've taken on the additional responsibility of staffing one of the information tables. We will need 5-6 people to work the table with at least a couple of them being men who can walk around the event to check on things and help with candy distribution. It's a fun afternoon and we hope you'll join us! Look for sign up sheets in the narthex on Sunday.



### Hey Kids

What a great job you did yesterday as we are getting ready for our annual fundraiser to be held on Sunday, November 11th. Our Bible stories have been on helping others so again this year we will be filling Christmas stockings for kids at Sand Springs Community Services.

Have a wonderful "Fall Break" and see you on Sunday.

Miss Debbie & Miss Marty



Wednesday, October 31

5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

4th & Main Street

Please remember to sign up in the Narthex

AND

don't forget,

**WE NEED CANDY!!**

### Head Ushers

8:45am-Amanda Honeycutt

11:00am-Eddie David

### Children's Church

8:45am-Kingdom Kids

11:00am-Jami Warkentin

10/21-Becky Barnes

10/28-Debbie Schmidt

11/4-Communion

11/11-Susie Honeycutt

### Sunday Counters

10/21-Betty or Howard Smith & Karen Wilder

10/28-Sondra Allen & Dick Ford

11/4-Bob Barnes & Jami Warkentin

11/11-Janie Moore & Kent Warkentin

### Youth Dinners, Served 6:30, Wednesdays

10/17-Priscilla Circle

10/24-Noah/Searchers SS Class

10/31-Trunk or Treat

11/7-CIA/Pathfinders

11/14-Faith Circle

### Welcome Center

January & May & September-CIA/Pathfinders

February & June & October-Harmony

March & July & November-Discovery

April & August & December-TNT

### Fourth Monday Community Dinner

5:30-10/22-Fellowship Hall

5:30-11/26-Fellowship Hall

5:30-12/24-Fellowship Hall

### All Church Mission Strategy Team (MST) Event

10/19 at 5:00pm-The Well

11/16 at 5:00pm-The well

12/28 at 5:00pm-The Well

### Prayer List

#### "The Prayer Box"

*Jim & Vi McAllister, Martha Scudder, Charlene Reeves, June Brown, Mary McGowan, Mary Lea Forsythe, Kevin Harris, BW Proft, Sue Shaw, Michael Bostwick, Greta Green, Bob & Cathy Hula, Bill & Clare Caldwell, John & Sylvia Johnson, Barbara McClintock, Montie Box, Owen Johnston, Ruth Weaver, Darin Grayson, Pauline Hanigar, Frank Slane, David Allen, Bruce & Mona Warren, Last Week's Prayer Chains & Unspoken Requests*

*If someone needs to be added to the prayer list or if someone was taken off too soon, please contact Tracey in the front office to update prayer list.*

# Fourth Monday

## COMMUNITY MEAL

4th Monday of the Month  
Fellowship Hall • 5:30-7:00 p.m.

# October 22nd

The General Conference taking place in February 2019 will determine how the United Methodist Church will approach human sexuality. Simply put, the General Conference will decide whether or not to allow people who are openly gay to be married in United Methodist congregations or to serve as clergy.

Three plans are under consideration: the One Church Plan, the Connectional Conference Plan and the Traditionalist Plan.

The Commission on a Way Forward, a diverse group of clergy and laity from around the world that examined every paragraph of The Book of Discipline related to human sexuality, has recommended the One Church Plan in a report to the Council of Bishops. However, deep divisions remain among United Methodists who believe the One Church Plan either does too much or not enough to address the denomination's stance on human sexuality.

### **The One Church Plan**

The One Church Plan would allow conferences, pastors and churches the flexibility to decide for themselves how to address the marriage and ordination of LGBTQ+ persons within their ministry context. In addition to removing restrictive language regarding sexual orientation, the One Church Plan adds language that protects the religious freedom of pastors who choose not to marry or ordain "self-avowed practicing homosexual persons." The plan also ends the threat of church trials over same-sex weddings.

"The Commission hears a yearning from both traditionalists and progressives for more space," the report states. "The One Church Plan is built on the belief that it is possible to live with more space while we focus on our common mission."

### **The Connectional Plan**

The Connectional Plan would replace the five jurisdictional conferences in the United States with three values-based conferences that annual conferences, churches, and clergy would choose to join. While this option prevents the denomination from being formally divided, a number of constitutional amendments would be required before the plan could be put into place. In addition to restructuring conferences, the Connectional Plan also allows for boards, agencies and seminaries to be reformed to accommodate the new denominational structure.

"The Connectional Conference Plan provides both space and connection between those parts of the church currently in deep conflict," the report states. "The space is needed for us to live together with different core convictions on ordination and same gender marriage. The connection allows us to continue to accomplish more in ministry across the globe than we could separately."

### **The Traditionalist Plan**

The Traditionalist Plan, as its name suggests, is the most conservative of the proposed plans. In addition to maintaining current language in The Book of Discipline, the plan expands its definition of "self-avowed, practicing homosexuals" to include LGBTQ+ persons who are married or living in partnership. It also makes complaint procedures against clergy easier to process and provides a provision for churches to leave the denomination.

Unlike the One Church Plan and the Connectional Plan, the Traditionalist Plan was not a focus of the Commission until the April 29-May 4 meeting of the Council of Bishops requested it be developed by the end of the Commission's final meeting on May 16.

Commission members expressed concern that the time allotted was not enough to develop a full plan. To meet the deadline, the Commission ended its work on a new traditional plan and submitted a sketch of a plan that had been sent to the Council in November 2017.

### **Potential for Schism**

"I think there will be a schism of some sort regardless of what happens in February," said Brian Bakeman, executive director of the South-Central Jurisdiction and Oklahoma delegate to General Conference. "The question is how bad will it be and who does it affect."

Rev. Linda Harker, lead pastor at Norman-McFarlin and head of the Oklahoma delegation to General Conference, believes all United Methodists should be spiritually grounded in prayer about General Conference.

"If we can trust that God can make a way when there seems to be no way, and that we would trust and continue to pray together as a denomination, seeking for that way that would keep us together, because we're better together than we are apart. What makes us so great as a denomination is what one can't do, together we can."

	One Church	Connectional Conference	Traditionalist
Summary of the Plan	<p>Freedom to minister within missional context</p> <p>Defines marriage as covenant between two adults.</p> <p>Removes language that restricts pastors and churches from conducting same-sex marriage.</p> <p>Avoids formal division of the denomination</p>	<p>Replaces current US jurisdictions with three values-based conferences similar to jurisdictions: Traditional, Unity, Progressive.</p> <p>Avoids complete division of denomination.</p> <p>Requires a number of constitutional amendments.</p>	<p>Maintains current language in The Book of Discipline.</p> <p>Broadens the definition of “self-avowed, practicing homosexual” to include persons living in same-sex marriage or partnership.</p> <p>Makes complaint procedures easier.</p>
What does this mean for churches?	<p>Local churches decide wedding policies.</p> <p>Will covenant with bishop regarding whether the church will accept LGBTQ+ pastor.</p> <p>No provision for gracious exit.</p>	<p>Churches will follow their annual conference to a Connectional Conference unless they vote otherwise.</p> <p>Churches in the Unity Conference will be able to set their own policies regarding building use for same-sex marriages.</p>	<p>Provides for gracious exit by allowing any 50 congregations to form a self-governing church if they are in “irreconcilable conflict” with the plan.</p> <p>Churches leaving denomination must contribute to Conference’s share of unfunded pension liability.</p>
What does this mean for clergy?	<p>LGBTQ+ persons can be fully ordained.</p> <p>Clergy decide whether to conduct a same-sex wedding service; military chaplains will be required.</p> <p>No more church trials for same-sex wedding.</p>	<p>Active and retired clergy and bishops can choose who they want to affiliate with.</p> <p>Ordination would be recognized by all three connectional conferences.</p> <p>Deacons and full-time local licensed pastors may see fewer ministry opportunities.</p>	<p>Requires clergy to agree to uphold provisions in The Book of Discipline regarding homosexuality.</p> <p>Sets minimum penalties for conducting same-sex weddings.</p>
What does this mean for Conferences?	<p>Annual Conference decides on ordination policies regarding LGBTQ+ persons.</p> <p>Central Conferences can maintain ministry practices.</p> <p>Maintains current structure of boards, agencies and ministries.</p>	<p>Jurisdictional conferences will decide which connectional conference to join; annual conferences will follow their jurisdiction unless they vote otherwise.</p> <p>Annual conferences may revote to stay or join a different Connectional Conference every four years.</p>	<p>Prohibits bishops from ordaining LGBTQ+ clergy.</p> <p>Maintains current structure of boards, agencies and ministries.</p>

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR SAND SPRINGS UMC

**\*-Not sponsored by SSUMC but welcome**

### **Monday, October 15**

10:00am-Al-Anon-Upstairs  
6:30pm-Bible Study  
7:00pm-Boy Scouts-The Well

### **Tuesday, October 16**

7:00pm-Praise Team Practice

### **Wednesday, October 17**

7:30am-Men's Breakfast-Crescent Café  
1:30pm-Mission to Stitch  
5:45pm-Y4Y  
6:30pm-Youth-The Well  
7:00pm-Chancel Choir Practice

### **Thursday, October 18**

\*7:00pm-Collins Karate-The Well

### **Friday, October 19**

5:00pm-MST Family Movie Night-The Well

Food Trucks, Family, Friends, Fellowship

### **Saturday, October 20**

No Activities

### **Sunday, October 21**

8:45am-Contemporary Worship  
9:45am-Communion Service  
10:00am-Sunday School  
11:00am-Traditional Worship  
2:30pm-Church Council Meeting

### **Monday, October 22**

10:00am-Al-Anon-Upstairs  
5:30pm-4th Monday Community Dinner  
6:30pm-Bible Study  
7:00pm-Boy Scouts-The Well

### **Tuesday, October 23**

\*The Well in use  
7:00pm-Praise Team  
7:00pm-Priscilla Circle-Cheryl F.

The Well-SSUMC Family Life Center...Not sponsored by SSUMC but welcome

### ***Sand Springs United Methodist Church***

*PO Box 336-Mailing  
319 N. Main—Delivery  
Sand Springs, OK  
74063*

Baby Boy Shower  
For

Rhett Owen Pritchard,  
Soon to be son of  
Taylor & Jarck Pritchard  
(Daughter of Darrell & Amy Miller)

Nursery Colors

White and Black with a touch of Red  
November 4

2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at The Well