



# *Believe.....Belong.....Serve*

The Newsletter of the Parkwood United Methodist Church  
Proudly serving the Parkwood Community for 54 years

Mark 1: 14-15

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January 2015

## **Beginning with Covenant**

*God said, "Bring me a three-year-old female calf, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a dove, and a young pigeon." Abraham took all of these animals, split them in half, and laid the halves facing each other, but he didn't split the birds...After the sun had set and darkness had deepened, a smoking vessel with a fiery flame passed between the split-open animals. That day the Lord cut a covenant with Abram: "To your descendants I give this land, from Egypt's river to the great Euphrates..." (Genesis 15:9-10, 17-18)*

"Pastor Nathan," you're thinking. "What a bizarre passage to start a newsletter article with?" I don't disagree with you. The Bible, the Old Testament in particular, is filled with passages that do not make sense to us. They are the ones we crumple our eyebrows at, let out an audible "What?!" to, and sometimes skip entirely. We won't skip this one. This is an important one and a passage we will be wrestling more with at the end of our next sermon series: Covenant. It will be three Sundays long and will begin on January 18<sup>th</sup>. The passage that the snippet above is from will pop up again at the end of the series on February 1<sup>st</sup> and is definitely one we don't want to skip.

The purpose of this article is to prepare you for this talk we'll have in January and help start the conversation so that when it comes up again it doesn't catch us by surprise. I guess I should let you know what that passage above is all about. Well...it's about a covenant, between God and Abraham. It's a promise from God that if Abraham follows God, God will give him land and descendants that he couldn't begin to count. The technical name for this covenant, a name you'll want to hold on to, is suzerainty treaty. A suzerainty treaty is a situation in which a region or people (Abraham and family) becomes a tributary to a more powerful entity (God). This powerful entity promises to control its foreign affairs while allowing the tributary vassal state internal autonomy. In other words, God offers protection to this budding family/nation/kingdom against foreign powers and entrusts them to look after themselves. God is the suzerain and as long as Abraham upholds God's stipulations there will be blessings, but if not there will be curses.

“That’s all well and good, Pastor Nathan, but what about the scene above? Why are they splitting animals in two?” Again, you are asking all the right questions! It was a Chaldean custom that when confirming such a treaty, such a covenant, animals were to be split and then the parties involved would walk through it. This meant that the fate of the slain animal should also be the fate of the one who would break the covenant or contract. Now there is something very amazing when you know this bit of knowledge and read the passage. Did you notice anything unusual? Did Abraham walk through the slain animals? He did not. Only a pillar of smoke and fire walked through the animals. God walked between them to show that God and God alone was willing to suffer the consequences of the broken covenant. So...this covenant became very one sided. God promises land, descendants, handling of foreign affairs against the warring nations around them, and promises that even if Abraham breaks the covenant, God is willing to suffer the consequences. All Abraham is really asked to do is to trust in God and be fruitful and multiply.

Finding ourselves in the midst of the season of Christmas and, soon, Epiphany, we know this covenant has been lived out through Jesus Christ. When our obedience faltered we were not abandoned by God. Instead, God suffered beatings and death on a cross to restore our fallen relationship. God made good on God’s end of the bargain. So as we enter this season at Parkwood UMC, a season of covenant for the year to come, how are we making good on our end of the covenant? Are we trusting in God? Are we being fruitful in our evangelism and multiplying God’s kingdom? Please join us beginning on January 18<sup>th</sup> to learn what PUMC needs from you, what PUMC offers for you to live out this covenant, and what we can do together during our Covenant sermon series. Pastor Nathan



## **SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **The Seekers Class**

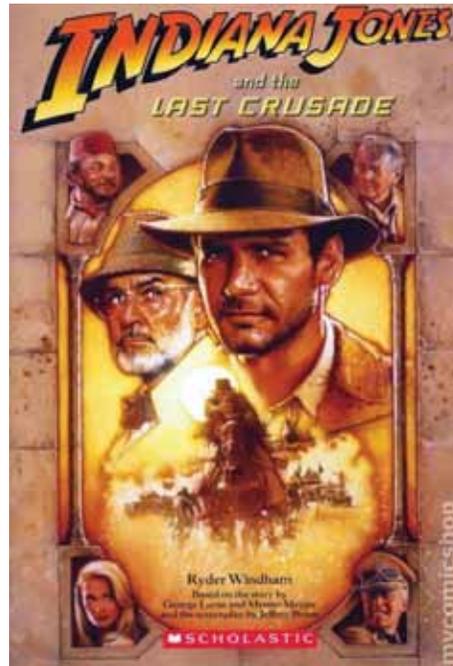
The Seekers class will continue its study of selected books of the Apocrypha. We will be studying 2 Maccabees from which the Jews derive Hanukkah and the Catholics Purgatory. These books fill in the time between the Old Testament and the time of Jesus and give us insight into the world into which Jesus came.

### **the Jacob Class**

the Jacob class has embarked on a study of all the books of Paul in the chronological order. Herb Schwarze and Ron Byrd will be conducting this study.

The Jacob class meets in room 1 at 9:30 am

## Friday Nite Movie



January 9, 2015

### 2015 Previews of Coming Attractions\*

Feb. 6	Spencer's Mountain	1963	Henry Fonda & Maureen O'Brien
March 6	Amazing Grace	2007	Ioan Grufford & Albert Finney
April 10	Top Hat	1935	Fred Astaire & Ginger Rodger
May 1	Loch Ness	1996	Ted Danson & Joely Richardson
June 5	Bringing Up Baby	1938	Cary Grant & Katharine Hepburn
July 3	Brigadoon	1954	Gene Kelly & Van Johnson
August 7	Million Dollar Arm	2014	Jon Hamm & Bill Paxton
Sept. 4	The Time of Their Lives	1946	Bud Abbott & Lou Costello
Oct. 2	How to Train our Dragon 2	2014	voices of Cate Blanchett & Gerard Butler
Nov. 6	Noah	2014	Russell Crowe & Jennifer Connelly
Dec. 4	Heaven is For Real	2014	Greg Kinnear & Kelly Reilly

\*Subject to Change

**Tombstones uncovered in Belarus town. See page.....12**

## **Feasibility Study Coming in 2015 As Part of PUMC's Capital Improvements Campaign**

Many of PUMC's members are concerned every time it rains: "Uh-oh, will we have to go to the church and mop the floors free of dirty rain water again?" Likewise, whenever we hear about a special celebration, market, parade or function occurring in the parking lot across from the church, many wonder: "Will there be a space for me to park my car so I can attend the PUMC church service (or function)?"

Resolving these two issues has been a concern for many years now within our PUMC congregation. Most of us agree that "something should be done", but "how these issues should be prioritized" is still a discussion of our church leadership.

To achieve a consensus of what ought to be "the priority capital issues", as well as to perhaps also uncover formerly-unrecognized opportunities to improve our Parkwood United Methodist worship experiences:

**We will be undertaking a Feasibility Study during spring 2015. A representative sample of PUMC church members will be contacted and interviewed, and asked to complete a confidential questionnaire regarding prioritizing capital projects, identifying important improvements, and ascertaining support within PUMC for what will be undertaken.**

Part of the study will also contain questions relating to how strongly you feel about supporting the capital improvement projects on PUMC's docket, including your idea about your degree of support, through your personal pledge to help fund the costs of the improvements.

The United Methodist Foundation and several consultants that we have interviewed have all advised us that this is the way our churches kick off a successful capital improvement campaign. We look forward to an informed start, and successful results from, our three-year PUMC 2015 Capital Improvements Campaign!



# NFL Playoff Chili Cook-off

Featuring the United Methodist Men Infamous

## Buzzard's Breath Chili,

Yours for any donation

Immediately following Church on January 25, 2015



**PLUS**

The Great Chile Cook-off Competition

Stack your chili up against other famous chili's found in our congregation and win a Major Prize!!!\* Must be in your own crock pot.

\*Actually it's only a printed certificate, but, HEY, we are a small church.





**Birthdays**

**Bob Jones 1-14**

**Alexander Nelson Omburo 1-17**

**Susan Clark 1-28**

**Jandy Mooney 1-28**

**Laura Denny 1-29**

**Henrik Ronni 1-30**

**Anniversaries**

**Bob & Betsy Newlin 1-2**

**Bill & Linda Youngblood 1-26**

Send birthdays and anniversaries to [crabbyron@yahoo.com](mailto:crabbyron@yahoo.com)



You are cordially invited to join the Chancel Choir at Parkwood United Methodist Church. The choir meets weekly on Wednesday nights from 7:30



**Parkwood United Methodist Men**

The Parkwood UMM will meet on Saturday morning January 17<sup>th</sup> for breakfast at Beneties Restaurant in the Greenwood Commons shopping center off Sedwick road at 8:00 am

## *United Methodist Women*



The Parkwood United Methodist Women will meet in the Church Hall on Thursday, January 22, 2015 at 7:00 pm.

## *Knit - Purl - Pray*

Parkwood United Methodist Church

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

2<sup>nd</sup>. and 4<sup>th</sup>. Saturday



If you are an experienced knitter/crochet, beginner or a novice; you are welcome. We all have our own level of expertise and love to share

# Christmas....One Last Word



## Truth for Life

### Professor or Possessor of Faith

Monthly Devotional from Rev. Alistair Begg of the Truth for Life Ministry

*Do you not know that the end will be bitter? [2 Samuel 2:26](#)*

Reader, if you are merely a professor and not a possessor of the faith that is in Christ Jesus, the following lines are a true sketch of your end.

You are a respectable attender at a place of worship; you go because others go, not because your heart is right with God. This is your beginning. I will suppose that for the next twenty or thirty years you will be spared to continue in this way, professing religion by an outward attendance upon the means of grace, but having no heart in the matter. Tread softly, for I must show you the deathbed of someone just like you. Let us gaze upon him gently. A clammy sweat is on his brow, and he wakes up crying, "O God, it is hard to die. Did you send for my pastor?" "Yes, he is coming." The pastor comes. "Sir, I fear that I am dying!" "Have you any hope?" "I cannot say that I have. I fear to stand before my God. Oh, pray for me." The prayer is offered for him with sincere

earnestness, and the way of salvation is for the ten-thousandth time put before him, but before he has grasped the rope, I see him sink.

I may put my finger upon those cold eyelids, for they will never see anything here again. But where is the man, and where are the man's true eyes? It is written, "In Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes."<sup>1</sup> Why did he not lift up his eyes before? Because he was so accustomed to hearing the Gospel that his soul slept under it. If you should lift up your eyes in hell, how bitter will be your wailings. Let the Savior's own words reveal the woe: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame."<sup>2</sup> There is a frightful meaning in those words. May you never have to spell it out by the red light of God's wrath!

1) Luke 16:23 2) Luke 16:24

## COMING IN FEBRUARY: THE METHODIST MEN'S FAMOUS "SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER"



**Albino White Tail deer seen grazing and hanging around the yard of Bev. Whitmore.  
Such a magnificent example of God's creatures.**

**Photo by Bev. Whitmore**

LORD'S DAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SABBATH
				<b>1</b> 6-8 Cubs Rm 7 7 Cubs Rms 1,3,4,5,6	<b>2</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> 9:30 Sunday School 11:00 Worship 3-5 GS Rms 5,7	<b>5</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise	<b>6</b> 5:30-6:30 GS R5	<b>7</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise	<b>8</b> 6-8 Cubs Rm 7 7 Cubs Rms 1,3,4,5,6	<b>9</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise 7:30 Movie Nite "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade"	<b>10</b> 9-11 Knit,Purl,Pray
<b>11</b> 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Youth Making Dog Blankets for Shelter 11:00 Worship 3-5 GS Rms 5,7	<b>12</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise	<b>13</b> 5:30-6:30 GS R5	<b>14</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise	<b>15</b> 6-8 Cubs Rm 7 7 Cubs Rms 1,3,4,5,6	<b>16</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 9:30 Sunday School 11:00 Worship "Covenant Series Part 1" 3-5 GS Rms 5,7 UMMF 2015 Kickoff!	<b>19</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise	<b>20</b> 5:30-6:30 GS R5	<b>21</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise	<b>22</b> 6-8 Cubs Rm 7 7 Cubs Rms 1,3,4,5,6	<b>23</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise	<b>24</b> 9-11 Knit,Purl,Pray
<b>25</b> 9:30 Sunday School 11:00 Worship "Covenant Series Part 2" 3-5 GS Rms 5,7	<b>26</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise	<b>27</b> 5:30-6:30 GS R5	<b>28</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise	<b>29</b> 6-8 Cubs Rm 7 7 Cubs Rms 1,3,4,5,6	<b>30</b> 9:30 Senior Exercise	<b>31</b>
				Parkwood United Methodist Church	January	2015

<b>TASK</b>	<b>JANUARY 4</b>	<b>JANUARY 11</b>	<b>JANUARY 18</b>	<b>JANUARY 25</b>
<b>9:15 Greeters</b>	Herb & Jan Schwarze	Jimmy & Florine Layman	Margaret Eiland and David Thompson	Ron & Betty Byrd
<b>10:45 Greeters</b>	Ron & Betty Byrd	Betsy Newlin and Priscilla Thompson	Ron & Susan Clark	Florine Layman and Ann Farmer
<b>Infant Nursery</b>	Ron Clark	Dianne Mitchell	Dena Roberts	Betty Byrd
<b>Ushers</b>	Andrew Key and Linnie Skidmore	Frank & Brenda Stephans	David Thompson and Ann Farmer	Ron & Susan Clark
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Jan Schwarze	Pat Nestler	Charlotte Thompson	Priscilla Thompson
<b>Communion Set-Up</b>	Pam Skidmore and Priscilla Thompson			
<b>Altar Flowers</b>				
<b>Member Care Cards</b>	Susan Oglesby	Pat Nestler	Jan Schwarze	Margaret Eiland
<b>Counters</b>	Margaret Eiland and Dianne Mitchell	Dianne Mitchell and Ron Byrd	Ron Byrd and Bob Newlin	Bob Newlin and Laura Denny
<b>FT &amp; Lection Reader</b>	Jan Schwarze	Herb Schwarze	Pat Nestler	Margaret Eiland
<b>Fellowship Refreshments</b>	Lisa Greene	Steve Jenkins and Aida Cancel	Brenda Stephans	Florine Layman
<b>Office Help</b>	Margaret Eiland	Ron Byrd	Jan Schwarze	Andrew Key

**MINISTRY TEAM FOR JANUARY 2015 \*If you can't serve on your day, please arrange for a substitute. Thanks**

## *Project to Recover Thousands of Jewish Gravestones Used in Construction of Belarus Town*



Thousands of Jewish gravestones have been used to construct buildings, roads and gardens in a Belarus town along the Polish border.

Residents recently discovered the gruesome truth that the stones used all over the town of Brest were actually Jewish tombstones—about 1,500 have been identified so far, some even being used in supermarket construction.

Debra Brunner, co-director of The Together Plan, a British charity promoting education in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, is helping work to have the headstones protected.

“I’ve never seen anything like it. It was bizarre. They were everywhere. The builders were very kind, though, and concerned and wanted to know what they should do with them,” she told the UK’s Daily Mail.

The headstones were part of a large Jewish cemetery dating to 1832.



A close up image of one such Jewish gravestone The Together Plan is trying to protect.

“Every Jew in Brest – bar 19 – was killed by the Nazis,” she said. “That’s 30,000 Jews killed. The whole community was annihilated.”

“The Jews weren’t allowed to practice their religion,” Brunner said. “The Soviets desecrated the whole cemetery and removed every single gravestone.”

The stones ended up being used as building materials for the local residents. Individuals used the gravestones as foundation in homes, as grindstones, and for roads. Reports indicate most people did not know the original source of the stones.

Recently, however, individuals who suspected that religious artifacts were being used took those suspicions to an area priest for his thoughts.

The priest said he could quickly tell the objects he was looking at were religious, and he encouraged the residents to take action.

“More and more people recognized them – and soon there was a tidal wave of headstones,” Brunner said.

The headstones are currently in a pile at the Brest Fortress. However, The Together Plan wants to draw the support of the U.S Commission for Jewish Heritage Abroad, garnering funds to erect a monument utilizing the headstones. The memorial would be built at the site of the original cemetery, which sits on land next to a running track.

Brunner added, “If the Jews get their memorial it will empower them – out of death will come new life.”



Gravestone remnants in Brest.