

# *The Messenger*

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**Spindale United Methodist Church**

PO Box 241 - 185 Mill Street Spindale, NC 28160

March 2026

## **Eric's Ethereal Cereal**

Recently, a former United Methodist bishop challenged her listeners with a two-word-seed: “**graceful hospitality.**” United Methodists are people of grace. We receive grace. We offer grace in response to grace. Hospitality is a broad word, much larger than a table filled with food in a fellowship hall. Hospitality is a way of life for those who follow Jesus—*The Way*. Dare I say that Graceful Hospitality is God’s idea?

In Isaiah 58 we meet the rag-tag band returning to their ancestral homeland after a half-century hiatus. The prophet offers them a word from God on the nature of true hospitality. Eugene Peterson translates one portion of that message using these words.

*“I’ll give you a full life in the emptiest of places— “*

If Isaiah were a politician instead of a prophet, we’d be tempted to turn the volume down, or, change the channel. But this is a word of LIFE for beaten down, war-torn, fragile, Israel and its a word for us as well ... *“I’ll give you a full life in the emptiest of places— “*

Isaiah is speaking to the residents of Jerusalem who have just returned home after 50 years of slavery in Babylon. They are faced with the daunting task of rebuilding the holy city and surrounding community following the ravages of exile. And while we might be tempted to think that the first generation of those who returned to Jerusalem we’re eating together with glad and sincere hearts, thankful for their new-found freedom, the truth is they were fighting over who should rule in Jerusalem, with factions grabbing for power. All the while, these same power-hungry leaders prayed loudly and fasted in false humility.

According to Isaiah, God had enough of this pretentious behavior and was fed up with the self-righteous, chest-pumping, “look at me” crowd bent on ruling Jerusalem. God had a vision for his chosen people. So, here’s God’s vision statement for his people as named by the prophet. Might it be a vision God still holds for the Church?

***“What I’m interested in seeing you do is: Sharing your food with the hungry; inviting the homeless into your homes; putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad; being available to your own families; getting rid of unfair practices; being generous with the hungry; giving yourselves to the down-and-out; and quit blaming victims and gossiping about other people’s sins.”***

Far from a stump campaign speech ... in fact, what follows God’s vision is the promise of God to all those who will hear this word as a Word of God. Listen to what God says:

***“Your lives will begin to glow in the darkness; your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight; I will always show you where to go; I’ll give you a full life in the emptiest of places.”***

As Amy Oden reminds us:

***“It surely would have been easy to believe that simply residing in Jerusalem, the holy city, made the citizens holy. It was equally tempting to believe that performing holy acts, like fasting and prayer, make one holy. Isaiah’s challenge shakes them from these comfortable religious assumptions. We, too, are prone to think that proximity to holy things (church, Bible, sacraments, pastor) makes us holy. This is, of course, idolatry. The proximity that matters is our faithfulness to God which, Isaiah points out, is manifest in our faithfulness to the way of life God has provided.”***

By the graceful hospitality of God, each of us has been called to follow the Way of Life who is Jesus. We didn’t find Jesus – Jesus found us. The Spirit witnessed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is working even now to bring us a full life in the emptiest of places.

**Blessings & Peace!**

**Pastor Eric**

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## **CHURCH STAFF**

Pastor	Rev. Eric Marshburn
Office Manager	Jennifer Ruppe
Financial Secretary	Janet Atkins
Director of Music	Jeane Watson

## **Church Office Hours**

Tuesday through Friday, 9am - 12noon

## **Worship Assistants**

Liturgist	PJ Roehling
Greeter	Jennifer Ruppe

## **Small Groups**

**Bible Study** is held on Sunday mornings at 10am.

**Book club** meets on Thursdays at 7pm. They are reading “Separation of Church and Hate” by John Fugelsang.

## CHURCH NEWS



*Spring Forward*  
**DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME**  
SUNDAY, MARCH 08, 2026



February Community Meal

### Frankful Fridays

The Frankful Friday Crew will be sharing a free hotdog meal on the second and fourth Fridays of each month (March 13 and 27). We will be set up at 12 noon.



### Scam Email

The church office received a fishing (scammer) email that appears to have come from Eric. Be sure to check the email address of any emails that appear to come from him.

### Upper Room Devotionals

If you would like an Upper Room Devotional mailed to you, please email or call the church office.

### Community Meal

Come join our volunteers as we are hosting a Drive Thru Meal on Wednesday, March 18 at 5pm. Contact Bill McDaniel if you would like to help. We will be serving sloppy joes.

**Saturday Night aLive** will be on Saturday, March 21 at 6:30pm. Mark your calendars to come and join us for a night of food, games, and fun. Start spreading the word!



**Thank you** to everyone who gave so generously to the Computer Fund!! We now have the funds needed and have placed our order.



**Congratulations** to the SUMC basketball team! We finished the season a perfect 14-0 and won the tournament championship. Well done guys!

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### **HOMEBOUND MEMBER OF THE MONTH**

Lynne Potter  
Trinity Ridge, Room 707  
2140 Medical Park Dr  
Hickory, NC 28602

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### **COMMUNITY NEEDS**

**Yokefellow** – Pasta

**Grace of God** – individual cans of Vienna sausage, beanie weenies, potted meat, packs of peanut butter crackers, gallons of canned vegetables.

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### **MINISTRY OF THE MONTH**



We are collecting Kleenex Tissues for Spindale Elementary School.



### **Prayer Requests**

- Stephanie Lattimore – Friend of Jennifer Ruppe
- Andy Francis – Friend of John Higgins
- Doug Pryor
- Wayne Henson
- Daniel Dover
- David Solomon
- Jack Bridges
- Patti Deviney
- Tony Marshburn - Eric's dad
- Tim McBrayer
- Bill Metcalf
- Jimmy Johnson
- Johnny Hopkins
- Charles Clute
- Tommie White
- Lynne Potter
- Wade Ogle Jr - Friend of the Bridges
- Kenny Cole - Brother of Stephanie Higgins
- Lisa Moore - Sister of Jeri Shuck
- David Wiseman - Cousin of Jeane
- Gina Gold - Friend of Brooke Watson
- Bobby Stone – Brother of Tommie White
- Thadd Hodge - Nephew of Jeanette and Lucille
- Michelle Gillis - Friend of John and Stephanie Higgins

## March Birthdays

2	Gail Jones
2	Elizabeth Dalton Robinson
4	Ethan Lyles
7	Johnny Hopkins
10	John McDonald
10	Logan Bridges
16	Melody Long
17	Matt Atchley
22	Harley Adrianse
23	Jennifer Ruppe
23	John Robinson
25	Carolyn Dalton
25	Melanie Dailey
25	Linda Shehan
28	Pam Carpenter

## March Anniversaries

20	Jack and Marsha Bridges
29	Charles and Jeanette Crain

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## LAST MONTH

<b>January 25</b>	Winter Weather Closure
<b>February 1</b>	Winter Weather Closure
<b>February 8</b>	
In Person Attendance	60
Online Reach	468
Budget Offering	\$ 5,155.00
YTD Giving to Budget	\$ 11,298.00
YTD Needed to meet budget	\$ 26,280.00
<b>February 15</b>	
In Person Attendance	39
Online Reach	1,141
Budget Offering	\$ 6,808.00
YTD Giving to Budget	\$ 17,519.00
YTD Needed to meet budget	\$ 30,660.00
<b>February 22</b>	
In Person Attendance	56
Online Reach	292
Budget Offering	\$ 4,550.00
YTD Giving to Budget	\$ 20,454.00
YTD Needed to meet budget	\$ 35,040.00

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United Methodists and other faith leaders march toward the U.S. Capitol on Feb. 25 during “Faithful Resistance: A Public Witness for Immigrant Justice” in Washington. Holding the left end of the banner are United Methodist Bishops Minerva Carcaño, LaTrelle Easterling and Cynthia Moore-Koikoi. Photo by Mike DuBose, UM News.

### A Pivotal Moment in UMC History ...

#### A Faithful Call for Immigration Justice, Accountability, and Human Dignity

On February 25<sup>th</sup>, more than 2,000 people of faith marched around the U.S. Capitol to witness to the Christian faith and to let immigrants know that they do not stand alone. “As people of faith shaped by the Wesleyan tradition and joined by an ecumenical and interfaith commitment to justice, we affirm that every person bears the image of God and is worthy of dignity, safety, and care. Scripture makes clear that how a society treats the stranger, the poor, and the vulnerable is not peripheral to faith, it is a central measure of faithfulness itself.” (Matthew 25:35; Leviticus 19:34).



“The flag is not the symbol of our salvation,” she said, “nor of our redemption. The eagle never flies higher than the cross.”



Bishop LaTrelle Easterling gives the sermon during worship for “Faithful Resistance: A Public Witness for Immigrant Justice” at Capitol Hill United Methodist Church in Washington. Photo by Mike DuBose, UM News.



United Methodist Bishops Alfred Johnson (left) and Cynthia Moore-Koikoi hold the left side of the banner as participants in “Faithful Resistance: A Public Witness for Immigrant Justice” walk past the U.S. Capitol in Washington. Photo by Mike DuBose, UM News.



Pastor Eric Marshburn and PJ Roehling



Participants in “Faithful Resistance: A Public Witness for Immigrant Justice” gather near the U.S. Capitol in Washington. Photo by Mike DuBose, UM News.