

Spruce Street UMC Newsletter

386 Spruce Street

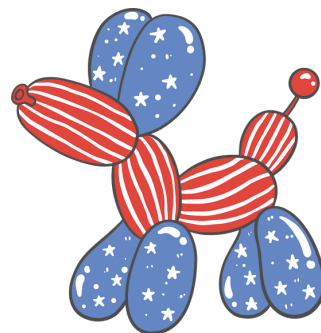
Morgantown, WV 26505

304.292.3359

Sunday Worship Times

8:30 a.m. In-Person & 10:45 a.m. In-Person & Online

July Newsletter 2026



July Ramblings 2026

Learning to Pray with God's Words

Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Many Christians struggle with prayer. We know we should pray, yet often find ourselves searching for the right words. At times we are joyful and words come easily. At other times grief, fear, disappointment, or confusion leave us silent before God.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's classic book, *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*, offers a refreshing and biblical answer: God has already given His people the words to pray. He has placed them in the Book of Psalms.

Although this small volume can be read in just a few sittings, it is rich with theological insight. Bonhoeffer begins by asking a profound question: **Who is praying in the Psalms?** His answer is both simple and life-changing. Ultimately, the Psalms are the prayers of Jesus Christ. Because Jesus is both fully God and fully man, He is the perfect One to pray these prayers. When believers pray the Psalms, we are joining our voices to His.

The book then examines the different kinds of Psalms—creation, the law, the history of God's people, the Messiah, the Church, life, suffering, guilt, enemies, and praise. Bonhoeffer shows that every category teaches us something about God's character and our relationship with Him. Together they encompass the full range of human experience, reminding us that no joy, sorrow, fear, or struggle is beyond God's care.

Finally, Bonhoeffer explains the place of the Psalms in the worship and prayer life of the Church. The Psalms are not merely private devotions; they are the prayer book of God's covenant people. For centuries they have united believers across generations and cultures in worship before the Lord.

July Birthdays

7/1	Matthew Wolfe
7/2	Leo Sanders
7/2	Scott Schlobohm
7/4	Freda Stotts
7/7	Jeff Carr
7/9	Art Ford
7/9	Nancy Johnson
7/9	Neal Johnson
7/10	Jennifer Henrich
7/18	Sharon Hilleary
7/19	Rev'd Martha Ognibene
7/21	Mackenzie Johns
7/21	Carolyn Keech
7/22	Joanna Broskey
7/25	Mark Loar
7/26	Neil Leftwich
7/29	Bill Peterjohn
7/29	Randy Gyorko
7/28	Linda Wise
7/30	Sue Christopher
7/30	Antonio Smyth



One of the most compelling sections of the book is Bonhoeffer's discussion of Jesus and the Psalms. From His childhood, Jesus would have learned the Psalms as part of His worship. Throughout His earthly ministry, He quoted them regularly. He sang the Psalms with His disciples after the Last Supper before going to the Mount of Olives. In moments of conflict, He answered His opponents with words from the Psalms. Even as He suffered on the cross, the language of the Psalms was on His lips.

When Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" He was praying Psalm 22, the great psalm of the suffering Messiah. When He declared, "Into Your hands I commit My spirit," He was praying Psalm 31. His life, ministry, suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation all fulfill what the Psalms foretold.

This changes the way we read and pray these ancient songs. We are not merely borrowing the prayers of Israel; we are praying with the very words our Savior prayed. We learn not simply to express our own emotions but to allow Christ's own prayers to shape our hearts.

Modern prayer often begins with our feelings. While God certainly welcomes our honest emotions, Bonhoeffer reminds us that prayer is also formative. The Psalms teach us what to love, what to fear, what to confess, and what to hope for. They give us words when we have none of our own.

The joyful Psalms teach us gratitude. The lament Psalms show us how to bring grief honestly before God. The penitential Psalms lead us into sincere confession. The Psalms of trust strengthen our faith when fear threatens to overwhelm us. The Psalms of praise lift our eyes from ourselves to the greatness of God.

For thousands of years, God's people have prayed the Psalms. Jesus prayed them. The apostles prayed them. The early Church prayed them. Countless believers throughout history have found in these inspired songs a daily companion for worship, comfort, repentance, and hope.

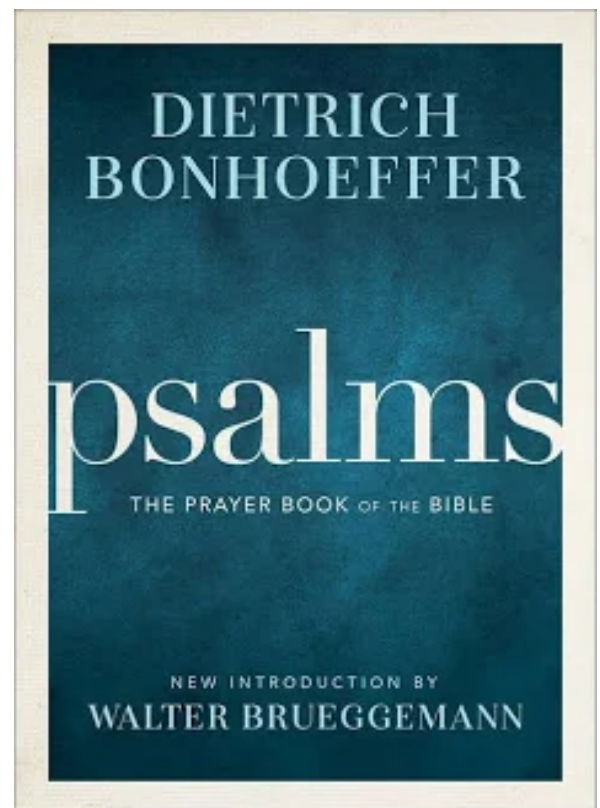
Perhaps it is time for us to recover this practice.

A simple place to begin is to pray one Psalm each day. Read it slowly. Read it aloud. Ask what it reveals about God, about Christ, and about your own heart. Turn each verse into your personal prayer, allowing God's Word to become your words.

Bonhoeffer's little book may be brief, but its message has the power to transform a lifetime of prayer. It reminds us that prayer is not first about finding the right words—it is about receiving God's words, praying them back to Him, and allowing them to shape us into the likeness of Christ.

As we pray the Psalms, we discover that we are never praying alone. We are praying with the saints through the ages, with the Church around the world, and above all, with our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Every Blessing,
Pastor Bart





Music Musings

MORE THAN MUSIC



When we think of music, it can be as simple as remembering one's favorite song and hearing it internally all day long. It can be a favorite hymn, or something patriotic to sing on a community day. In a cultural sense, music usually expresses our deepest emotions and experiences, with or without words.

Music is also described as “the international language.” All cultures engage in singing, in a beautiful mosaic of styles across the world. With the technology of today, a homogenous canon of songs and music has permeated every country. Beethoven's “Ode to Joy” comes to mind in this regard. I distinctly remember John Lennon's “Imagine” at the 2012 Olympics in London. “Amazing Grace” appears in 6 American languages in our United Methodist Hymnal. And who does not recognize the *Star Wars* themes? Or *Indiana Jones*?

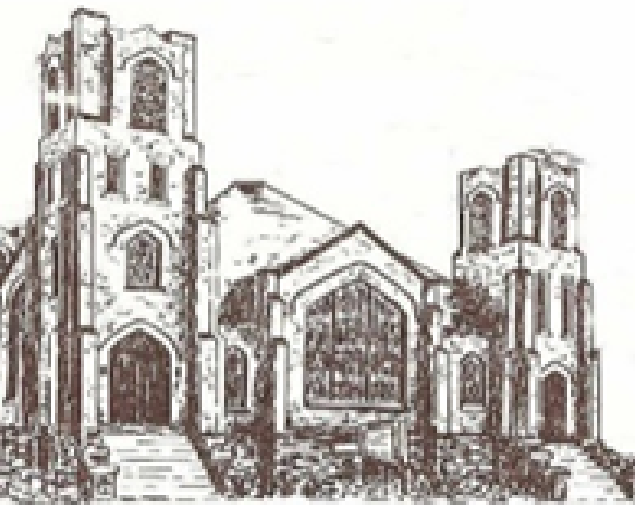
Some spoken languages are musical: they are called Tonal Languages, where a syllable such as “MA” can have 5 or 6 unrelated meanings depending on which vocal timbre is used. Over one billion people speak a tonal language, with Mandarin being the most common. Western and Romance languages use tone instead for emphasis, conclusion, or questioning, without changing the meaning of the words.

Even the birds have distinct patterns of natural songs. God's feathered creatures create such beauty and melodic snippets for us to hear in His beautiful world. And what is more beautiful than the vocalizations of a baby, sounds which we must recognize for their meanings of wonder, hunger, distress, love, or laughter?

Stop and listen. Take time to absorb sounds within your mind, and around you. Our language is not just black and white like a text or email, but requires feeling, emphasis of strength as well as kindness of tone. Meanings require sincerity and truth. The music you nurture and sing becomes a part of your Christian witness to others!

*Open my ears, that I may hear voices of truth thou sendest clear;
And while the wavenotes fall on my ear, everything false will disappear.
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

- Marguerite



A Note From Em

Thursday, July 2nd is my last day in the office as the Spruce Street UMC Administrative Assistant. I will be moving to be in Buckhannon full time to manage my dance studio (if you want to keep up with what I'm up to, check out Studio 33 Dance Center on Facebook)! I have enjoyed my time here and meeting all of you, and will continue to provide bulletins, slides, and newsletters until the position is able to be filled by someone new in order to make the transition as easy as possible. Thank you all for welcoming me this past year and for your support as I move into my next chapter!

Blessings,

Em



Spruce Street UMC is looking for a part-time
Administrative Assistant

If interested, Please send resume to
secretary@sprucestreetumc.org

~ Part-time competitive pay ~ Bonuses available ~
Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm



Parsonage Move

Our Pastors Bart and Martha have been moved to our church's parsonage at 1344 Winona Ave. The trustees have overseen the improvements. New flooring, new paint, and new garage doors were the major things replaced. We were so thankful that we had the money saved to do all the repairs. I'd like to thank all my trustees who contributed their time and talents for this successful move!

- Robyn



Reverend Stephanie Bennett, District
Superintendent sbennett@wvumc.org

Phone: 304.366.6811
Fax: 304.333.0224

June 22, 2026

Dear MonValley Pastors and Administrative Council Chairpersons,

At the 2026 West Virginia Annual Conference, it was approved that the Annual Conference will move forward with six districts. Proposed boundary lines for these six districts have been shared on the conference website, and minor adjustments continue to be made as the transition progresses.

At this time, there will be no changes for you and your charge. You will continue to be part of the MonValley District. While the district to which you relate is not changing, there are several transition items that you will notice in the months ahead.

The MonValley Supervisory Area will hold its District Conference on August 30, 2026 at Bridgeport UMC, 251 Worthington Drive, Bridgeport, WV. At that conference, new district officers will be elected to reflect the updated district boundaries and the expanded ministry of the supervisory area.

As we move forward, I will be intentional about including the new areas of our district in upcoming meetings, gatherings, and ministry opportunities. I also wanted to invite you and your church to an open house at the MonValley District Office, 3000 Technology Drive, Fairmont on Sunday July 12 from 2-4pm. Drop in anytime for light refreshments. I will have available at that time an updated schedule of district gatherings and events for the coming year.

Thank you for your faithfulness and patience as we move through this season of transition together. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions as we navigate these changes. I look forward to partnering with you in ministry in the days ahead.

Peace,

District Superintendent

Mon Valley District; West Virginia Conference; The United Methodist Church

*Transforming Appalachia through God's love - growing disciples, healing communities
and casting a future of hope rooted in Christ.*

3000 Technology Drive, Fairmont, WV 26554

Gifts of Love

Thank you for your continued support of this ministry. This time of year, we are in need of sunscreen and insect repellent to help our unhoused neighbors. If you have items that you no longer need that are gently used, please consider donating those items to our Gifts of Love. Suggested items include but are not limited to:

- Dishes
- Pots & pans
- Silverware
- Glasses/mugs
- Cooking utensils
- Can openers
- Mixing bowls
- Serving dishes/spoons
- Tupperware
- Cleaning supplies
- Coffeemakers
- Toasters
- Blenders
- Microwaves
- Dishcloths
- Towels
- Baking sheets
- Bakeware
- Measuring cups/spoons
- Potholders/mitts
- Cutting boards
- Storage organizers
- Blankets/quilts
- Linens
- Backpacks
- Flashlights/lanterns
- Batteries
- Tents
- Sleeping bags
- Basic hygiene items



SCOTTS RUN DONATIONS

We collect nonperishable food and other items for Scotts Run Settlement House in our Overflow Area. **Please keep our low-income neighbors in mind as you are doing your grocery shopping. Additional helpful things to donate include non-perishable, high-protein items such as canned tuna or beans and whole grains such as rice or pasta. These items help keep bellies full!**



July Lectionary Scriptures

July 5th - Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67; Psalm 45:10-17
Romans 7:15-25a; Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

July 12th - Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 25:19-34; Psalm 119:105-112
Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23



July 19th - Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 28:10-19a; Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24
Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

July 26th - Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 29:15-28; Psalm 105:1-11, 45b
Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

SPRING HEIGHTS CAMP REGISTRATIONS OPEN

Spring Heights Camp and Retreat Center is the outdoor camping ministry of The West Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church that provides creative opportunities and a safe and loving community for everyone to know God, develop character, care for creation, and build connections that will shape them into a lifelong disciple of Jesus Christ.

Get ready now for the highlight of your summer! Camp at Spring Heights is like nowhere else on earth and we would love to have you join us. Pick your own activities in Camp Outrageous – or join us for a classic or a specialty camp, the choice is yours!

We work hard to create an environment where God can easily work in the hearts of everyone here. Ready for an epic, life-changing experience? Jump on in! See you soon!

Everyone knows that camp is tremendous fun, and its benefits are proven. Multiple studies reveal that camp fosters independence, builds self-esteem, strengthens faith, creates meaningful friendships, and builds valuable life skills.

Through swimming, we teach water safety; horseback riding builds confidence; nature study fosters interest in the stewardship of God's creation. The list goes on and on. All of our programs focus on faith, friendships, and fun. Questions? Feel free to call us at 304-927-5865 or email us at info@springheights.org

Register now at springheights.org



Prayer Chain

Our prayer ministry is very active. If you are part of the prayer chain and have not been receiving the emails or if you'd like to join the prayer chain, please send your email address to Carolyn at cocarr@yahoo.com. Short term prayer list can be found in the bulletin each week. Names are moved to the long-term list in the Newsletter after a month in the bulletin.



Prayers For

Lilly Arrison
Lori Britton
Saundra Britton
Terry Colman
Becky Davis
Rubyann Downes
Sara Fuqua
Norah Glenn
Mike Grant
Judy Harman
Carolyn Hubbard
Mike Hubbard
Aly Hutzel

Carolyn Keech
Lucy Labin
Ben Lee
Charlotte Murphy
Sharon Richman
Mary Belle Rowe
John Simpkins
Syndy Slaughter
Philip Stanger
Linda Sweetman
Penny Turley
Carlton Withrow
Mary Lynn Withrow

Upcoming Events

Community Meal – Fourth of July

Thank you to everybody who participated in one way or the other in our Memorial Day dinner. We have another dinner coming up on the Fourth of July. The times would be a little bit different – 1:00 – 3:00. We are providing desserts & drinks.

Your participation by donating food and/or helping to set up and clean up would be very much appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Carolyn Carr.



SAVE THE DATE!

VBS

— THEME: —

**God is always
with US!** 

 **WEDNESDAY NIGHT,**
JULY 15TH

 **5:00 PM – 7:30 PM**

 **AT SPRUCE ST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**
386 Spruce St, Morgantown



WHAT: ICE CREAM SOCIAL -SPONSORED BY UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

WHEN: SUNDAY JULY 12TH FOLLOWING THE 10:45 SERVICE

WHERE: DOWN STAIRS IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL

COST: FREE WILL DONATION

COME OUT AND ENJOY SOME ICE CREAM AND FELLOWSHIP WITH US

**THERE WILL BE A CHOICE OF CONES OR BOWLS/ MULTIPLE TOPPINGS / WE WILL HAVE
REGULAR ICE CREAM AS WELL AS DIABETIC FRIENDLY OPTIONS.**



MON VALLEY DISTRICT

UWIF Bookclub

What: Next Book Club Meeting

When: Tuesday, August 4 @ 6 p.m.

Where: In Person at Wesley United Methodist Church and

Via ZOOM @

<https://zoom.us/j/98629712987?pwd=kBgIPi94psl1TtakyFlwRW1M8axl34.1>

Meeting ID: 98629712987

Passcode: 268770

Book: The Women of the Bible Speak

Author: Shannon Bream

SAVE THE DATES!!

MonValley District Conference - Sunday, 8/30 @ Bridgeport UMC

District Day with Bishop Wallace-Padgett - Monday, 9/21 @ LIFE UMC



PRAYING WITH BONHOEFFER

A Spiritual Retreat on Prayer, Psalms, and the Presence of Christ

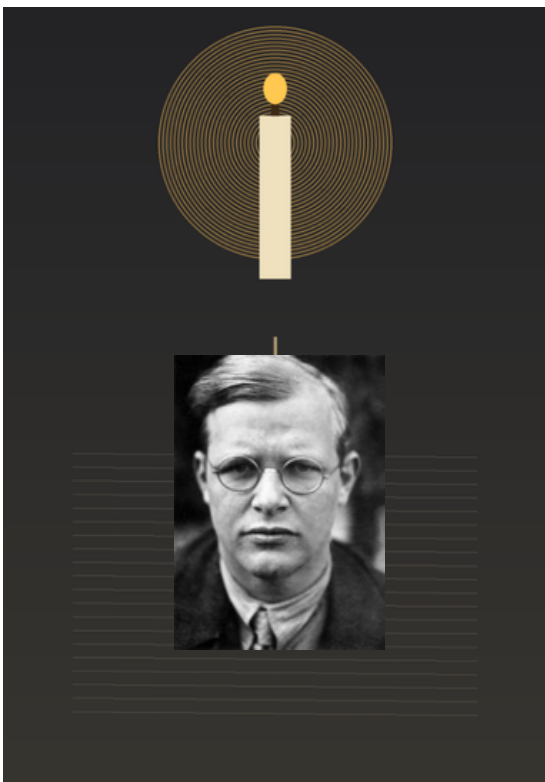
“When your words fail you — the Psalms will carry you.”

Saturday, August 22, 2026

10 AM - 3:30 PM

Through silence, guided Psalm prayer, spiritual direction, and communal worship, discover a deeper way of praying inspired by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Hosted by Pastors Mike Estep, Bart Thompson, and the Center for Spiritual Renewal



In a world overflowing with noise, anxiety, outrage, and exhaustion...
what if prayer was never meant to begin with *your words*?

Join Pastors Mike Estep and Bart Thompson for a deeply reflective spiritual retreat inspired by the life and teachings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer — pastor, theologian, resistor, and martyr.

Through the Psalms, silence, guided prayer, spiritual direction, and honest conversation, we will discover a different way to pray:

- Not performing.
- Not pretending.
- Not trying harder.
- But learning to let Scripture pray within us.

Retreat Theme

“The richness of God’s Word... not the poverty of our heart... shapes prayer.”
— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Throughout the day participants will:

- Pray the Psalms slowly and contemplatively
- Explore how Christ speaks through the Psalms
- Practice silence and sacred listening
- Wrestle honestly with anger, grief, waiting, confession, and trust
- Write a personal Psalm
- Experience communal prayer rooted in ancient Christian tradition

This retreat is designed for:

- Pastors and church leaders

- Spiritual seekers
- Prayer groups and small groups
- People carrying grief, questions, exhaustion, or longing
- Anyone who has ever struggled to find words for prayer

No expertise is needed.

Only openness.

Retreat Highlights

Morning Session

“Who Is Praying?” — Praying with Christ

Discover Bonhoeffer’s radical insight that in the Psalms, *Christ himself prays with us and for us.*

Midday Silence

Participants will spend guided time praying with Psalms of:

- Trust
- Waiting
- Confession
- Being Known

Afternoon Session

“Praying What We Avoid”

A courageous exploration of difficult emotions in prayer: anger, fear, lament, and honesty before God.

Closing Worship

A communal Psalm prayer reminding us: *We are never praying alone.*



Pre-class assignment -

Bonhoeffer (2003) Full HD Documentary <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrFxlPnXzc>

- **Saturday, August 22**
- **9:30 AM - Gathering**
- **10 AM – 3:30 PM (Lunch Provided)**
- **Location: LIFE United Methodist Church, 3000 Technology Dr, Fairmont, WV 26554**

Register here: <https://bit.ly/PrayingBonhoeffer>

Suggested donation: \$50.00

Online donation - <https://pushpay.com/g/lifeumc?campusId=&clickOrigin=&itemId=>

Or day of event

Contact: Mike Estep, pastormike@lifeumc.org or 304-288-5220

Spruce St UMC Office Hours & Contact Info

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Monday - Thursday)

304-292-3359

sprucestumc.org

SPRUCE STREET STAFF DIRECTORY

Pastor	Rev. Bart Thompson	304-813-7213 pastor@sprucestreetumc.org
Lay Minister	Eldon Callen	304-290-7142 eldonc45@gmail.com
Administrative Assistant	Em Pechon	304-292-3359 secretary@sprucestreetumc.org
Financial Secretary	Judy Kennell	finance@sprucestreetumc.org
Music Director	Marguerite Bostonia	margbos6@gmail.com
Choir Director	Ashley Lewis	jashleylewis@gmail.com
Children's Ministry	Lena Glowacky	childrensministry@sprucestreetumc.org
Building Supervisor	Bonnie Johnson	johnson26541@yahoo.com
Prayer Focus	Carolyn Carr	cdccarr@yahoo.com

July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 <i>5th Sunday after Pentecost</i> 8:30 & 10:45AM Worship 10AM Sunday School	29	30	1 11AM Bible Study 6:30PM Barnabas Group	2 10AM Chair Yoga	3	4 1PM Holiday Meal
5 <i>6th Sunday after Pentecost</i> 8:30 & 10:45AM Worship 10AM Sunday School	6 1:30PM Heritage Bible Study	7	8 11AM Bible Study 6PM UMM	9 10AM Chair Yoga	10	11
12 <i>7th Sunday after Pentecost</i> 8:30 & 10:45AM Worship 10AM Sunday School	13	14	15 5PM VBS	16 10AM Chair Yoga	17	18
19 <i>8th Sunday after Pentecost</i> 8:30 & 10:45AM Worship 10AM Sunday School	20	21	22 11AM Bible Study	23 10AM Chair Yoga	24	25
26 <i>9th Sunday after Pentecost</i> 8:30 & 10:45AM Worship 10AM Sunday School	27	28	29 11AM Bible Study	30 10AM Chair Yoga	31	1