

News From The Rock

March 2023

Solid Rock United Methodist Church • Warren, Indiana

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Separation Discernment Update

In October 2022, Solid Rock conducted a straw poll to determine the wishes of the congregation regarding disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church. That survey found that 61% of members surveyed favored disaffiliation. Since an official vote would require a two-thirds majority to pass, Administrative Council halted the process pending any new developments.

UPDATE

The Indiana Conference offered a recalculation of disaffiliation costs in January. That calculation revealed a 47% reduction in costs. As a result, Council called for a second straw poll.

That poll, tabulated by Council at their February 14 meeting, showed that 71% of members responding now favor disaffiliation. After reviewing those results, Council requested an official Church Conference with the Conference Superintendent for the purpose of voting on disaffiliation. That vote has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 14, at 6:00 p.m.

It is important to know that:

- Only Solid Rock members may participate in this vote. (If you are unsure of your membership status, please call Jane Hitzfield in the church office.)
- According to the *Book of Discipline*, only members present at the Church Conference may vote. There is no provision for absentee votes or voting at another time.
- Nonmembers may attend as observers.

More detailed information will be provided as we near that date. It is important that all members who are able try to be in attendance at this meeting.

Global Methodist Church Presentation

Many have asked about options for Solid Rock if disaffiliation is approved. Many disaffiliating churches are choosing to join the Global Methodist Church.

Rev. Scott Pattison, a representative of the GMC, will provide information in a presentation at Solid Rock on Thursday, March 2, at 6:30 p.m. This will be a great opportunity to hear from one who has been involved in the creation of this new denomination and can respond to questions.

No decisions will be made at this meeting. It is for informational purposes only. Please plan to attend if your schedule permits.



Sound System Update

Solid Rock is undertaking an upgrade of our sound system to improve quality and reliability of an aging system. Thanks to the generosity of many, we are much closer to our fundraising goal than we expected to be at this point.

As a stopgap measure, we had planned tune-up to the system until funds could be raised to purchase new components. We now have nearly 70% of the funds needed in total for the project, enough to get equipment ordered and installation scheduled.

If you would like to help us reach our goal, a sound upgrade fund has been established, and any gift you would consider would be greatly appreciated!

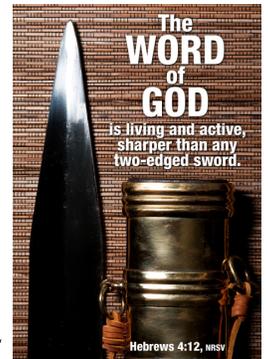


Shepherding Moments

by Pastor John Boyanowski

When the Bible Steps on Our Toes

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we



must give account. Hebrews 4:11-13; ESV

Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Galatians 3:19-22; ESV

What is the most beloved and hated book ever written? The Bible. The Bible is the most-sold book of all time and continues as such. At the same time, the Bible

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Our Vision: Sharing and experiencing the life-giving message of Jesus, to restore wholeness and build an intentional community of hope, relationship, and purpose for everyone.

Firm Foundation Easter study

The Firm Foundation Sunday school class, meeting in the church kitchen each Sunday morning at 9:00, will begin a new Easter study on March 19. "Easter," by J.D. Greear, will examine the significance of the events of that first Easter.

"The resurrection is the most important moment in history, but it is more than an event we remember on Easter Sunday. Join pastor J.D. Greear as he takes a deeper look at Jesus' life,



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Sunday School at 9:00
Worship at 10:00
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Church Phone: 375-3871

Church Office
Office Phone: 375-3873

Monday - Thursday
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Closed Friday

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News deadline for the April newsletter: March 19

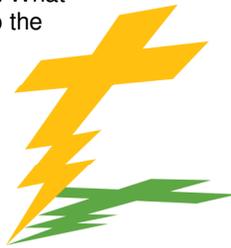
death, and resurrection in the Gospel of Matthew, revealing the ways we should see ourselves in Jesus' story.

"Jesus died for us so that he could be alive in us today. Easter changes everything."

Join us and make this study part of your Lenten preparation for the celebration of the Resurrection!

Come be energized

After some time away from the church, author Donald E. Miller returned to the fold. He writes: "One thing that brought me back ... was asking simply: What are the alternatives to the church? Where are the communities that sanction the pursuit of meaning and truth as a legitimate enterprise? that have material and personal resources to assist in this search? that provide regular occasions for confession of failures? that renew and inspire? that provide a setting where children are nurtured? where family members can be buried? where births can be celebrated? where social issues can be debated?"



Miller concludes: "There are a number of institutions that deal with one or several of these questions, but historically the church has demonstrated its ability to energize all of these activities."

Resurrection faith

In spring 2020, while Manhattan pastor Timothy Keller was writing a new book about Easter, the world — and his world — stopped. The coronavirus pandemic ravaged New York City, and Keller received a stage 4 cancer diagnosis. Suddenly the theologian had to confront death head-on and reassess his views on eternal life.

"I realized I only half-believed I was going to die," he tells The Christian Post. "In some ways, I also only half-believed in the Resurrection — not intellectually so much, but all the way down deep in my heart. I realized I needed to have a greater, a deeper faith in the Resurrection, both intellectually and mentally."

While undergoing cancer treatments, Keller took a deep dive into historical and scriptural evidence for Easter's main event. He also prayed that the Holy Spirit would make the Resurrection, which can seem abstract, real to his heart.

Facing your own mortality puts earthly things into clear perspective, says the pas-

tor, and it's a wake-up call for Jesus' followers to act. "The Resurrection means that God has not at all given up on the world," Keller writes in *Hope in Times of Fear*. "But beyond that, it gives meaning to suffering and gives hope that through the suffering will come healing. The Resurrection guarantees that this renewal is certain and is also a call for Christians to work now against what is wrong and unjust."

Christian symbol

SHAMROCK — St. Patrick used the shamrock to teach people about the Godhead. Holding up a shamrock, he challenged them, "Is this one leaf, or three?" Inevitably, people replied that it was both, prompting St. Patrick to draw the analogy that so, too, is God: one God in three Persons — the Holy Trinity.



Lighthearted blessings

- May the hinges of your friendship never grow rusty.
- As you slide down the banister of life, may the splinters never point the wrong way.
- May you be in heaven a full half-hour before the devil knows you're dead!
- May the good saints protect you and bless you today, and may troubles ignore you each step of the way.
- May good luck be your friend in whatever you do, and may trouble be always a stranger to you.

Surrender

What a privilege and opportunity it is to utterly come to the end of one's hope — not only to run out of answers but to run out of questions. To be beyond fighting, to come



to that suspended animation where we are so confused and so weak that we can neither fight [nor] run.

When you come to the end of yourself, you find the beginning of God. And there and nowhere else, you find the answers you seek. You find fulfillment for the longings of your soul.

—Max Anders

January Financial Update

General Fund Receipts.....	\$25,635
General Fund Expenses	\$12,837

(Continued from page 1)

has caused great division and arguments throughout the ages. Many believe it to be the inspired Word of God, and many believe it to be a book of fairy tales. Personally, I know the Bible to be the Word of God. Many contest that man wrote it and not God, thus making it refutable. However, as God directs the hands and hearts of the writers, God sends the Holy Spirit to declare the validity and integrity of the Scriptures for the believers who are searching for the truth.

What I truly believe is the reason why people challenge the Scriptures is that it steps on our toes: it causes us to understand that when it comes to what man believes sin is totally off-key to what God believes and declares as sin. The Bible tells us that some of our personal beliefs conflict with the will of God for our daily and spiritual lives. It tells us that what we find desirable and pleasurable are the very things we are called to turn away from. Man then judges these and tells God He is wrong and that He needs to “get with the times” and submit to man’s will. What man forgets is that we have NO right to demand from God anything, and that when God mandates us to turn from sinful behaviors and actions, this is in our best interests and how He is trying His best to guide and protect us from great pain and suffering. Man believes they have a better handle on this, yet we always fail to learn from our mistakes.

When the Bible steps on our toes, it is to guide us that what we are currently doing is wrong and that if left unresponsive, we can fall from grace and dive deeper into our sinful habits and desires. I am thankful when God steps on my toes for these reasons:

- **It shows that God is still with me** – God never gives up on us. He disciplines us because He loves us like His own children. Like that parent, God’s Agape/Unlossible Love is ever-present. At the same time, as in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15), He never forces His will on us but leaves our free will to us. If I can feel God’s presence, even if it’s not a pleasant experience, I know we are still connected.
- **It protects me from dangers I am not able to see** – When God uses Scriptures to guide us, we would do well if we heed its prompting. If we truly believe that God is whom He says He is, we also understand that God knows all and sees all. God sees things that our finite minds can’t comprehend or see at the

right time. Sin is always pleasurable until the price we pay for this sin comes due. When this time comes, sin is no longer a pleasure but an enslavement.

- **It causes me to ask if I am following God’s will or my own will** – Many of us who proclaim Jesus as Lord fail to see how our will clashes with God’s will. If we are truly following God’s will, our will harmonizes with His will and great things take place, not only in our lives but also in the lives of others. When it doesn’t harmonize with God’s will, we become numb to feeling God’s movement. If we remain in this, we will never feel the cancer that sin causes spiritually and we die. My own will promotes the division which separates us from God at times because just when I think I know better, God opens my eyes to His truths and will. If I choose to follow my own will, I am choosing to be disconnected from God’s will. King Saul (found in 1 Samuel) did this and the spirit of God left him, and he never knew it.

I am VERY thankful to feel the pressure of the Scriptures weighing heavy on my heart from time to time because I forever want them to guide me and protect me. I don’t look at the Bible as a book of dos and don’ts, but as a guide that teaches me to be in the center of God’s will and how He wants me to minister to His people.

If God is using the Bible to step on your toes, be thankful and not resentful. It’s God reaching out to you and sharing His love. Sometimes it might be painful to admit, but it always brings healing or guidance when we need it most. Don’t turn away from the Bible, embrace it and cherish its wisdom and knowledge. Use it to glorify God and enrich your life with it.

The unBeatitudes

Let’s remember what the Beatitudes are. They are not commandments, though they speak with authority. They are not requirements, though they define the kingdom of heaven. The Beatitudes are encouragements. The Beatitudes are the congratulations of Jesus, who wants us to walk with a spring in our step, and sparkle in our eye, and hope in our hearts, because God has set us apart to himself and given us graciously everything worth having forever.

The kingdom of this world has its own congratulations to pass around and its own promises of reward. Each of the Beatitudes

of Jesus can be turned into its photographic negative, like this:

- Congratulations to those who feel entitled, for they grab whatever they want.
- Congratulations to the carefree, for they shall be comfortable.
- Congratulations to the pushy, for they shall win.
- Congratulations to the greedy, for they shall climb the food chain.
- Congratulations to the vengeful, for they shall be feared.
- Congratulations to those who don’t get caught, for they shall look good.
- Congratulations to the argumentative, for they shall get in the last word.
- Congratulations to the popular, for theirs is the kingdom of this world.

Is that what you want? Lots of people do want that. Our world exerts itself massively every day to enforce a whole way of life based on a whole worldview against Christ. But if your heart recoils from that and you long for a place in the lovely kingdom of heaven and you’re willing to come under the rule of Christ, then he wants you encouraged. God has set you apart to himself. God is including you in the renewal of this whole world.

What is the gospel? It is the good news that God has not forsaken us in all our evil but the King has come, and through his death and resurrection the promised renewal of all things has finally been set in motion. The good news is that the world is not spinning out of control but heaven is moving in and taking over with powers that evil cannot stop.

That is what’s happening here on the platform of human history. That’s the real story. And through union with Christ, God has included you on the inside of this mega-miracle. Whatever your life may be right now, your future is as bright as the promises of God.

Yours is the kingdom of heaven, *you* will be comforted, *you* will inherit the earth, *you* will be satisfied, *you* will receive mercy, *you* will see God, *you* will be called sons of God, *yours* is the kingdom of heaven.

So we see that the Beatitudes are not handy tips for improving your week; they are the enduring promises of Christ, because you have stepped over the line to join him by faith in a whole new world so beautiful only God can accomplish it.

—Ray Ortlund,

From a sermon given at Immanuel Church
February 10, 2008



Prayer Requests

Requests for prayer should be directed to
Solid Rock Office at 375-3873
during office hours or
Pastor John Boyanowski
at **(260) 580-8305**
when office is closed

Check these out!

There are several very good books for your reading pleasure and encouragement on the shelf in the fellowship area. Help yourself!

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

Informational presentation regarding
the Global Methodist Church
March 2 at 6:30 p.m.

Church Conference for official
disaffiliation vote with members
March 14 at 6:00 p.m.

We thank you that even though we have our own idea of how our life should look, often setting out according to our plans, that your ultimate purpose prevails. We ask that you prompt us when we set out to make plans that we make them according to your will, and not our own. We ask that you remind us to come alongside you as we surrender every detail to fulfill your greater purpose. Please align our hearts with yours, our ideas with yours, and our will with yours. For your ways are higher than ours and your plans are greater than ours, and nothing is impossible with you. Lead us every step of the way. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

- Alisha Headley

