THE CIRCUIT RIDER



Middleburg United Methodist Church Editor: Nichole Batten

September/October 2021 Issue 4

My family and I were blessed to take a vacation together recently to St Augustine Beach. As it happens, one has a lot of time to think about things while resting on the beach and doing absolutely nothing. While enjoying this experience, I remembered a book that I read in seminary that describes the state of United Methodism as of 1995. William Abraham, in his book 'Waking from Doctrinal Amnesia,' gives specific suggestions for our theological situation in the United Methodist Church. In the last chapter, he gives eight responses to the question, 'What Then Shall We Do?' Of the eight, I think number three is most important and here's why.

(3. A strong effort needs to be mounted to introduce the laity at large to the doctrinal standards and the literature they have provoked. It is ludicrous to think that the laity will seriously engage in the appropriation of doctrine or engage in theological reflection upon it and around it if they are left in the dark and given no opportunity to encounter the material. There are hosts of educated and motivated laity who would be fascinated by United Methodist doctrine and theological reflection related thereto if these were properly taught; they would also find their ministry and service deeply enhanced.)

Please hear me say, "you matter" and your participation in the work of His kingdom matters. As a Christian, your beliefs matter and what is taught in the Church-Doctrine, matters. The laity is a huge part of the church body. It is out from among the laity that pastors are called into all areas of ministry. The laity become ordained elders, deacons, and bishops. The laity recognize those called into full-time ministry and choose their elders, and vote on candidates. The laity is on the board of ordained ministry as mandated by the book of discipline. The laity has a vote at annual and general conference. And most importantly the laity pays the bills.

There is a time to talk and a time to be silent, (Abraham p.12). There is an ongoing conversation as to the doctrinal standards that identify United Methodism or the lack thereof (the articles of religion and the confession of faith both found at www.umc.org) and its resulting amnesia. The laity must be a part of this conversation less the satellite of the great tradition drops the call. I agree that matters of Christian doctrine are inescapable, and that United Methodists as a whole are deeply confused about their doctrinal identity. It is time to face the truth, take our medicine and move forward, and come to our sanctified senses.

The truth is foundational to who we are as Christians. When rightly seen doctrine is foundational truths given by God as revelation in the work of Jesus Christ. Doctrine thus becomes part of who we are in Christ, and if doctrine reveals who God is and we don't know who we are in Christ, it's no wonder the church has amnesia. Doctrines write themselves out of a relationship, and when we ignore or weaken them, we are saying that what God has revealed is unimportant and we know better, we have a better way, an agenda. We must live doctrine and when necessary, teach it, not only to our children in confirmation but paralleled to the adults in our congregations.

John Wesley had doctrinal standards and wasn't willing to give up his revelation of God. Members of United Methodism cannot defend their faith, they can't state who they are in Christ. Doctrine gives people a way to identify themselves. Our culture has written its own doctrine, ours God wrote. We could mine this issue for years as a church, and we may need to if it means discovering the true doctrinal treasures that can heal the church. I believe in you all. I've seen what good you can do. Give the laity a shovel, a pickax, and a wheelbarrow, they'll get to work.

In Christ-the Word of Truth,

Fastor Dain Sanderson



Happy Late Summer to all!

As everyone knows, according to the calendar, fall is quickly approaching, but in Florida the heat will be with us full strength for the next six weeks, at the very least. Then, just as you despair of never wearing your sweaters again, the nights begin to bring the slightest chill. Within a week of the first nighttime cooling, you walk out one morning to a change; its hard to put your finger on, but the air smells different, the birds are looking busy, and all of nature is singing, "It's time, it's time!" It may be hard to spot if you are from out of state, but this native girl knows fall is a coming. In the meantime, enjoy the remainder of the long days!

As to what has been going on in the kids' side of things, we are enjoying our Children's Choir practice and performances. We did a bonus back to school performance that wasn't originally on the calendar but was a lot of fun. To see the children growing in confidence in front of the congregation is a wonderful thing. The third Sunday Pastor messages are also such a blessing, and we are grateful to spend that time in the Sanctuary with everyone else. It's a special place to be, and I am grateful the kids are there on a regular basis.

In addition, a change has been made in our Sunday School classes. A fourth class has been brought back on the schedule, so the ages are less spread out within the classes. So, a great big "Thank You" to Misty DiGiovanni for leading the new 1^{st} - 2^{nd} grade class. Nancy Long now has 3^{rd} and 4^{th} and Brenda Weeks is back in action taking 5^{th} and 6^{th} . Diane Wilder still has the sweet Pre-K and Kindergartners. Thank you, Ladies! You are invaluable.

September 15th begins the first Kid Min Wednesday night, 6:00-7:30 in the FLC. We will focus on Bible lessons, crafts, and fellowship. I am looking forward to seeing y'all there. If you have any questions, please reach out to me. I am in the office Wednesday's 10:30-3:30 or you can reach me through email at MUMCKIDMIN@middleburgumc.org.

With Kind Regards,

April Watts
Children's Ministry Coordinator



Just like that, the school year has begun! Confirmation is behind us, and we can all look forward to the wonderful things that fall has in store. I don't mean pumpkin spice coffee either. I have been overjoyed with the volunteers who have been working diligently to keep our youth group running smoothly. We have a couple of wonderful ladies that have been offering consistent help, and above all, have been super role models for the young girls in our group to look up to. I am excited for all the new opportunities that God is placing in front of us. Let us pray for Him to move in a mighty way this year.

Wesley Brotherhood

The men's leadership team of the Wesley Brotherhood (formerly the United Methodist Men) has continued to meet. "33 The Series: Authentic Manhood" classes also continue to meet via Zoom and other platforms. Here are some testimonials from our participants on how these classes have helped them in their spiritual journeys:

"This has helped me understand why my father did many of the things that he did when I was growing up."

"I look forward to helping other men grow in their relationships."

"This class has opened my eyes to how I should be relating to my kids."

"Looking in the mirror has sometimes been tough, but I am starting to like the man that I see looking back."

"The 33 series is an indispensable resource that lays out in plain language and clear framework, exactly what God's design and plan are for men of any age."

"This is that class you wish you had 'back then' but it is timely no matter when you find it."

"The Men's 33 Series has given me the guidance and encouragement to be a Better Man."

"The 33 series has helped me discover the amazing plans that God has for me."

"This series is helping me to look inside myself, confront behaviors and attitudes that have not served me well, and learn the biblical principles that will allow me to improve in my walk with Christ each day."

"This is a great series for young fathers but is also helpful for a grandfather too."

"I feel blessed from this series; it has brought a lot of feelings out of me that I can share with men that I trust and love."

"I am really going deeper into my spiritual growth, growing closer to God and other men."

If you are interested in cultivating a closer walk with Christ and using biblical principles to guide your life, please contact the church office for more information. We will be offering Volume 1, A Man and His Design, in the near future to all who would like to begin participating in this series. May God Bless all of you!

Your Wesley Brotherhood Leadership Team



The Reality of Time

Time is marching unstoppably onward, isn't it? School is back in session; summer's humidity is wringing us out as it gives way to fall and possibly cooler weather; pumpkin flavoring is back at Dunkin Donuts and Halloween décor is in the stores. My garbage can grown potatoes have been harvested (despite my best intentions, they were closer to *peanut*-size but tasty in pot roast); Betsy gave me sprouted garlic and I am going to try my hand at growing some in the holes of cement blocks — hopefully deer will leave it alone. Sandra's Wednesday morning Bible class is, as always, challenging and fulfilling and the Monday night class is studying Elijah. The Children's Choir performed a Back-to-School concert with their backpacks, pulling out things they considered important in their lives as we sang "Count Your Blessings." They are working on learning the 10 Commandments and have the first 5 down pretty well: April wrote them in easy to understand positive statements. Millie and Sandra got us a new state-of-the-art chart stand for song lyric display, eliminating need for paper songsheets and my trusty manila folders. I got 2 new packs of colorful markers during school supply sales and am stoked to begin teaching a new hymn on that clean chart paper. Hope I write in straight lines.

Time is waiting for no one or no thing. Presently in the news, unbelievable things are happening in our world. On the heels of a condominium collapse in South Florida, Covid spawned a new, vile variant while infected immigrants are flooding into America; Haiti suffered a huge earthquake with catastrophic numbers of lives lost; the dark and demonic Taliban is sucking the life out of Afghanistan and political parties on both sides in many countries including ours are going: "Oh dear!" Even our own denomination is buckling under social pressures and is preparing to split, dissolving into yet another name containing "Methodist" in the title. No matter how much we want to ignore or maintain status quo, "transformations" as violent as volcanic eruption are happening in our lifetime.

Time is perceived by human eyes differently than divine ones. Did we think the plagues and destructions spoken of in the Bible were just exaggerations in an entertaining story? When God parted and then with impeccable timing closed the Red Sea or the Earth to swallow up disobedient humans, was He just showing off? Did it happen real quick or had those humans had some time to consider their choices? A baby floating down a river being rescued by a princess and raised as her own, 90 year old Sarah bearing a long-promised child, an untouched young teenager bearing the Son of God, 5 loaves and 3 fish feeding thousands with a significant 12 basketfuls leftover – are we thinking God just moved "back then" and is dormant today?

It is **time** for believers to put their prayers into overdrive. God's Word does not whitewash or undo life's negatives but rather plainly points out *He means what He says*: His words are true, and **His time** is **His time**. You and I have no control over hurricanes, earthquakes, or human stupidity. We can only control to the best of our ability under His providential guidance what He bids us do. No matter how dismal situations are, we must, we must hold on to His promise. He is the One who spangled the heavens with stars, feeds the sparrows, and completely knows what is going on in the world – it's no surprise to Him. Therefore, divine reversals are His specialty – don't waste time telling God you can't succeed because of a mountain. Focus on the Mountain-Mover: His glory, His power, His truth. Start (and keep) walking in faith, following His lead, and watch the mountain step aside, even if it's molehill by molehill.

And as you are walking along the way, do take **time** to <u>sing</u> – off key or on, sweetly or energetically, because Great is the Faithfulness of our God.

**Susan



United Methodist Women was organized slightly over 150 years ago. Since that time, it has grown to have worldwide influence in working for the betterment of the lives of women and children. It is a JOY to be a part of this organization.

At our next meeting we will be looking at the extent of this worldwide influence. It is part of the "Global ministry of the church". Actually, United Methodist Women are the greatest contributors to this ministry. It is a JOY to be part of this ministry.

United Methodist Women have a written purpose of which we are reminded at each meeting. In order to fulfill this purpose, three new offices have been added to our MUMC-UMW: 1. Membership, nurture, and outreach - Linda Morrison, 2. Spiritual Growth - Jean Richards and 3. Education and interpretation — Esther Lee. It is a JOY to be part of these willing workers.

Although we have worldwide influence, our feet are firmly on the ground right here in Middleburg. With the help of our whole congregation, we just finished the back to school kits for children of Food Bridge clients. 226 children were able to start school well supplied with school necessities. We are looking forward to being able to give these same children a Christmas gift so that they know they are loved at this blessed season. It is a JOY to be part of these local traditions.

Lastly – This is my first Circuit Rider article as president of MUMC UMW. Again, I want to express thanks to Judy McNee (immediate past president) for her leadership and dedication the keep UMW alive and well at MUMC. It is a JOY to be entrusted with leadership in this ministry.

So-I am praying Christ's Love, Peace, and JOY to all,

Mary Lou Whittlesey

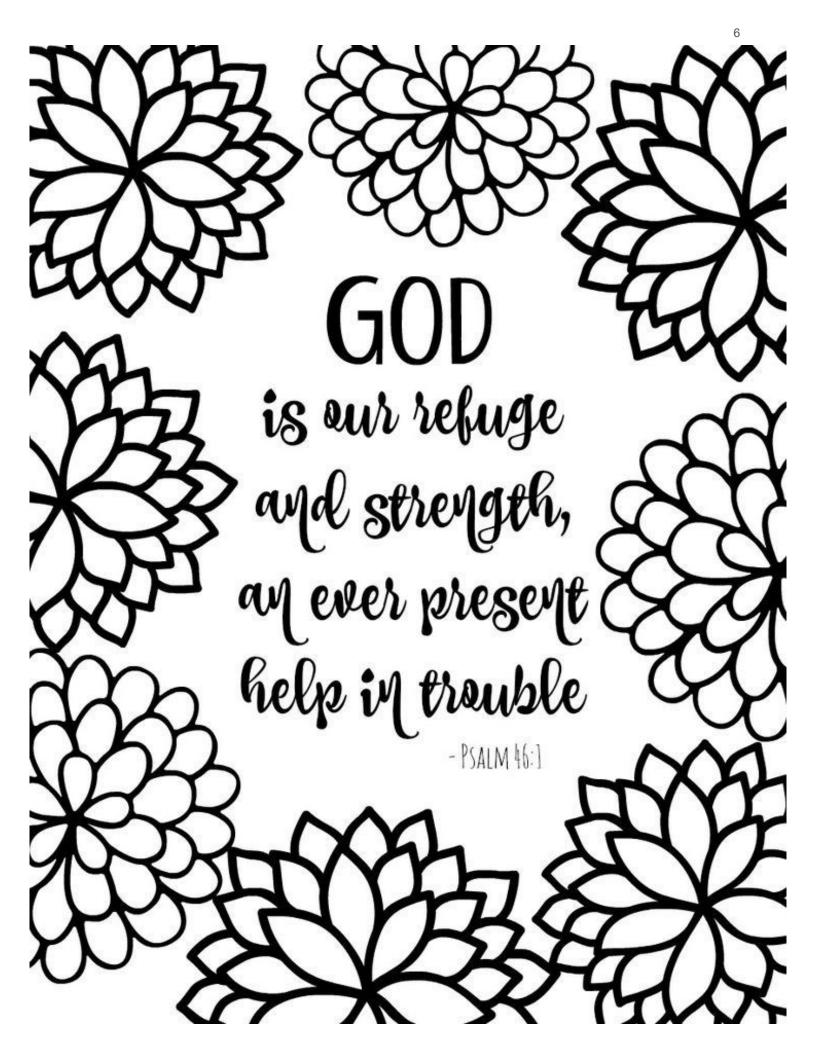


Please let the office know if any of the people listed below should be removed or if there is anyone else that should be added!

Scott Ashcraft, Rheta Barber, Dennis Barker, Joyce Brantley, Crystal Brooks, Jane Bullen, Meagan Campbell, Lib Creech, Helen Crotts, David Church, Danika Davis, Gary Driver, Jeff Driver, Blake Eckert, Rick Fife, Krickett Foschaar, Tony Fox, Carol & Richard Fouraker, Eileen Free, Rick Futch, Lee Goodnight, Teresa Gross, Annette Hagler, LA Hardee, Tom Howard, Ken Huff, Darlene King, Paul Lee, Kim Lemley, Yvonne Lempke, Lippincott Babies, Ernie Lord, Jim Lundy, Bob & Pat Lucas, Bob & Rose Lynch, Debbie McDonald, Ellen Moore, Curt Morrison, Linda Morrison, James O'Donnell, Ray Overly, Sam Payne, Doug Pope, Bill Roberts, Tina Rodgers, Kate Sasso, Robin Scherzer, Dan Smith, Nora Smith, Randall Smith, Joan Spencer, Allan Spencer, Nicholas Spencer, Ray Stovall, Jennie Warner, Gracie Washington, Richard Wehrman, Ann Woodard, Trinity Woodley, Robin Zagora & Family, Robert Zimmerman

Servicemen & Women:

Drew Baker, John Behrens, John Brantley, SGT Philip Buchanan, Jerry Dingman, Benjamin Harlowe, Ben Humphrey, Joseph Jankord, Howard Kalick, Caleb Kovach, Lola Lewis, Jarrod Linion, Matt Lippencott, Pete Matisoo, Kayla McClendon, Michael McLeod, Dustin Morrison, Brad Muller, Paul Noland, Vince Preston, Matt Ritter, Sarah Robinson, Alexander Rumrill, Josh Sansoucy, Breena Schmoll, Bret Shockley, Lawrence (Willie) Summers, Tim Sutton, Chris Teagle, Paul C. Trotman, Buzzy Updegraff, Jason & Jackie Warren, Daniel West, and Matthew West



Finances of the Church

Greetings brothers and sisters. We have been back worshiping together for about a year now. I know many people were extremely happy to be able to worship together. I was one of them. For me, online services were fine but I missed the singing together and talking to others in the congregation before and after the service. There's just something about worshiping together that makes the service more meaningful to me. But for those of you who choose to continue worshiping online, we continue to provide each Sunday's worship service online for you. The important thing is not how we worship but that we do worship.

Now that we're open, all the previous costs that went down because we weren't using the facilities (such as electricity for heating and air conditioning) are back up to pre-COVID levels and we are now fully staffed, either with paid or volunteer staff. With the PPP loan last year (which was forgiven after we proved we followed the requirements) and the Conference allowing us to make interest only payments on our FLC mortgage for six months, we were able to end the year with a positive balance. That's the good news! The bad news is that as of the end of July we are barely keeping up our giving with our expenses. And both are well below budget. Using July as an example, our expenses were only 87.6% of budget. However, our giving was only 71.2% of budget. Translating that into dollars means we spent almost \$5,500 more than we took in for July.

On the positive side, year-to-date (through July) we have had giving exceed expenses by \$6,345. But one unfore-seen major expense or more months like July and we are in big trouble.

I know that COVID has impacted many people and their jobs and the new Delta variant is not making matters any better. I want to first thank all those who have continued giving during these tough times. Next, I would like to ask you to prayerfully consider your giving to our church. For some, I ask you to get back to giving, if possible. To others, consider increasing your giving. If you're not yet tithing, consider taking a step, no matter how small, to move in that direction. However, please do not take this as a request to move your giving from specific areas like missions (e.g., Food Bridge, Bread Basket, Youth, etc.) to the general fund. Whatever facet of Middleburg Church or it's missions you are currently supporting, please continue to do so at your current level or higher.

A wise person once observed, "Half of any task is having the right tool, and the other half is knowing what to do with it." Although we may not often consider it as such, money is a tool which God can use in our lives as a means of spiritual growth.

You see, money is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end. And one of its primary spiritual "ends" is to instruct us and to help us grow spiritually. God especially wants us to avoid our natural tendency toward selfishness, greed, and hoarding. That's why our Lord Jesus said, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions" (Luke 12:15).

We as a church are here to support you, whether in person or online, in your spiritual growth. To do so, we need your support. You have many ways to get your support to our church. The offering plate is there for each service, the Postal Service is still delivering mail, and you have an online option. With the online option, you can set up automatic giving for every week or once a month. This way, even if you're on vacation, the church will still receive your gift.

God Bless and may the peace that passes understanding be with all of you.

Your brother in Christ,

Jack Eddington
Interim Finance Chair



Sunday School

There is a chair for all so come and join a class!

Children's Program: 9:45 - 12:00 in the Family Life Center

We ask parents and grandparents to bring your children and grandchildren for this important time in a child's life for them to learn about God and Jesus through study of the Bible. They will also learn to praise God through song.

9:45: Children's Choir, Bible Reading, learning verses, and snacks

Led by: April Watts, Susan Hendry, and Diane Wilder

11:00: Sunday School Classes, & Bible Lessons

- Nursery up to 3yrs. Marie Living
- P-K and K Diane Wilder
- 1st and 2nd Misty DiGiovanni
- 3rd and 4th Nancy Long
- 5th and 6th Brenda Weeks



Adult Classes - 9:45-10:45

There are four classes from which to choose so come visit and find one for you to enjoy and to learn.

⇒ Crusaders Class

Meets in the Church study. Their current study is from the Gospels - Romans, Hebrews, 2nd Corinthians and 1 John.

⇒ Tea Time Class

Meets in the Choir Room in the FLC. They study "Feasting on the Word Curriculum", which follows the Revised Common Lectionary.

⇒ Open Door Class

Meets in the Portable. Their study is led by Dr. David Jeremiah and is "Revealing the Mysteries of Heaven."

⇒ Heritage Class

Meets in the Historic Church. You will learn about the history of our Church and about Middleburg. The studies will be Bible based.

Church Council Meetings

These are the dates for the Church Council Meetings for the remainder of the year:

September 26th at 12 pm
October 31st at 12 pm
Optional meeting November 28th at 12 pm if needed



September 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
						Bread Basket 9-11 The Kitchen 11-1
5	6 Office Closed	7	8	9	10	11
Virtual Service	LABOR DAY			Food Bridge		Bread Basket 9-11 The Kitchen 11-1
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Virtual Service	Bible Study 6 pm		Bible Study 9 am Youth & Children	Food Bridge Joyful Movement		Bread Basket 9-11 The Kitchen 11-1
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Bible Study 6 pm		Bible Study 9 am Youth Children Purple Gang	Food Bridge Trustees 6 pm Joyful Movement		Bread Basket 9-11 The Kitchen 11-1
26	27	28	29	30		
	Bible Study 6 pm		Bible Study 9 am Youth Children			

Weekly Events:

BIBLE STUDIES/ CLASSES

Sunday: Various Sunday School Classes at

9:45 am

Monday: Bible Study - 6 pm - Portable Wednesday: 9 am in the Portable Seekers Young Adult - 6 pm

UMM: Various meeting throughout the week.

Seekers: Young Adult - 6 pm

UMM: Various meeting throughout the week

N.A. Meetings Tues. - 7:30 pm - Mongiovi House PURPLE GANG: Every 3RD Wednesday - Lunch -

11:30 an

Wednesday Nights - Youth & Children: 6:00 pm -

Location FLC

Thursdays: Cub Scouts - FLC - 6:30 pm - FLC Joyful Movement - 5 pm

FOOD BRIDGE MINISTRY

Thursday Drive Thru Distribution - 7:30-11:30 am

BOUTIQUE - Closed Temporarily **BREAD BASKET** - Every Saturday 9-11 am

THE KITCHEN - Every Saturday 11-1



October 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
						Bread Basket 9-11 Boutique 9-12 The Kitchen 11-1
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Bible Study 6 pm		Bible Study 9 am Youth Children	Food Bridge Joyful Movement		Bread Basket 9-11 Boutique 9-12 The Kitchen 11-1
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Bible Study 6 pm	Finance Meeting 1 pm	Bible Study 9 am Youth Children	Food Bridge Joyful Movement UMW - 6:30		Bread Basket 9-11 Boutique 9-12 The Kitchen 11-1
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	Bible Study 6 pm		Bible Study 9 am Youth Children Purple Gang	Food Bridge Joyful Movement Trustees 6 pm		Bread Basket 9-11 Boutique 9-12 The Kitchen 11-1
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	Bible Study 6 pm		Bible Study 9 am Youth Children	Food Bridge Joyful Movement		
31						
Church Council Meeting 12 pm						

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FOOD BRIDGE MINISTRY

Thursday Drive Thru Distribution -7:30-11:30am

BOUTIQUE - Temporarily Closed BREAD BASKET - Every Saturday 9-11 am

THE KITCHEN - Every Saturday 11-1



BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Lilly Morris
- 2 Kylee Smith
- 3 Bruce Berry
 Beth Cherry
 George Scoble
- 4 Bonnie Bailey Alice Brasher Jim Lyda
- 5 Karen Kwaak Donna Smith
- 6 Dennis Barker DeAnn Huff
- 7 Regina Clayton Rachel Hiter
- 8 Ken Rissmiller
- 10 Lenore GoodnightSam Richards
- 11 Mike Attebury
- 15 Jack EddingtonCraig VanGundy
- 16 Tony Fox

- 17 Bethany Hill
 Taylor Long
 Tori Summers
 Brenda Weeks
- 18 Vicki Dolder Judy McNee
- 21 Bob Lucas
 Bernie Van Matre
- 22 Janet Bruce
 Kathy DiBattista
 Glenda Harmon
 Rev. Roger Moore
 Chris Trueblood
- 23 Laney Carter
 Curt Morrison
 Mary Scoble
- 25 Ray Birkholz
- 26 Diane Kroll
- 27 Teresa GrossCrystal Warren
- 29 Steve CristStephanie Merring
- 30 Steven Spooner



BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Ruth Ann Dickerson Savannah Milam Denise Rogers
- 4 Colleen Marsteller Michael Reach
- 6 Jacob Dickerson John Grubb
- 7 Abbey Sanderson Nic Terrell
- 8 Emmy Hall
- 9 Gloria AllenCarolyn ConklinLee GoodnightEtta Simmons
- 11 Rick Fife

 Jeanie Simpson
- 12 Zach Updegraff
- 13 Richard Gross
- 14 Joshua Price Cody Rundio Stacy Spooner

- 15 Roy Wilkie
- 17 Jean Richards
- 20 Kathy Brooks
 James Geiger
 Ruth Paine
 Kathy Robertson
 Karen Rucker
 Caitlyn Simpson
- 21 Dianne Ashcraft
- 23 Marlene Stevens
- 25 Bill CarterCynthia RunnelsBill Updegraff
- 26 Tina Baker
- 29 Rachel Carroll
 Linda Deal
 Rev. Bryan Simpson
- 30 Diana Burns,
 Wendy Brewer
 Kim Hiter
- 31 Helen Hess Wendy Jackson

Anniversaries

- 4 Wendy & Duane Jackson Holly & Bill Updergraff Gerry & Buck Witt
- 8 Kim & Steve Crist
- 9 Sue & Woody Woodley
- 11 Ann & Dennis Barker

Anniversaries

- 10 Karen & Noel Rucker
- 15 Sue & Ray Vickerman
- 19 Jean & Tommy Williams
- 20 Marty & Paul Ackley
- 21 Vicki & Arthur Dolder
- 26 Martha & Gary Woodbury
- 30 Alice & David Brasher
- 31 Jim and Deb Sacco

Middleburg United Methodist Church

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Rev. Brian Sanderson, Sr. Pastor (850) 673-7309

Church Office:

(904) 282-5589

E-mail

middleburgunited@bellsouth.net



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Text "MIDDLEBURGAPP"

To: 779-77



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Middleburg United Methodist Church 3925 Main Street Middleburg, Fl 32068

PLACE STAMP HERE

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Go in Peace and Love

