

PURPOSE STATEMENT

“We are disciples of Jesus Christ committed to making a difference in the community and in the world through service and invitational outreach.”



The Messenger

First United Methodist Church, Chatham

February 2026—Vol. 30—Issue 2

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AROUND AND ABOUT FUMC

**THRIFT SHOP:
Blessing and Opportunity**

Because of our dedicated volunteers, we are a blessing to those who need our Thrift Shop and the church’s Family Food Pantry housed inside it.

However, many of those who were dedicated volunteers are not able to do so now. We need more volunteers who are able to “be a blessing” and give 3 hours on either a Thursday, Friday or Saturday to “man” the Shop, warmly welcome the visitors, and help with sorting out the donations. We receive some exceptionally nice kitchen goods, other household items, books and puzzles . . .



. . . as well as boutique and everyday clothing. We also have a dressing room where clothes can be tried on in privacy.



In the next column are lists of items we can accept and those we cannot accept because of space and/or not being saleable.

WE THANK ALL OUR DONORS!

Acceptable

- Apparel-in-season and out-of-season
- Children’s toys / China*
- Collectibles / Crystal
- Decorative bric-a-brac
- Drapes / Fashion accessories
- Shoes / Jewelry
- Games / Puzzles
- Home goods / Kitchen items / Linens
- NEW** plush/stuffed animals
- Pocketbooks
- Tableware / Towels

Unacceptable

- Answering machines, cassettes, CDs and DVDs—computers/printers/ Software / Typewriters / VHS tapes / VCR players
 - Appliances (large) / Furniture (large)
 - Bar bells / Books / Telephones / TVs
 - Bowling balls / Golf equipment
 - Box springs/Sleeping pillows/mattresses mattress pads
 - Cell phones / Chargers / Fax machines
 - Chandeliers
 - Christmas trees over 3’ / tree stands
 - Cribs / High chairs / Crutches / Strollers
 - Dehumidifiers / Humidifiers
 - Electric blankets or pads
 - Infant car seats / Play pens
 - Maternity clothes / Wedding dresses / Clothes hangers. No stained or torn clothing or having smells of moth balls or mildew.
 - Medical Devices / Walkers
 - Radios / Record albums
 - Roller skates / Ice skates / Ski equip.
 - Sharp knives (carving, steak, paring)
 - USED** plush, stuffed animals
- Please be advised that china and artwork must be approved—call 508.945.0474 to make an appointment.

The FUMC Family Food Pantry accepts non-perishable food. Please be sure it is not past their expiration dates. Thank you for caring about your neighbors.

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When we see God, it will not be a new discovery. It will be a profound recognition of that heart and soul of yourself that is already in union with God. All contemplation, all true prayer, is an attempt to go back to that place.

Richard Rohr



HAPPY BIRTHDAY
 2-9—Grace Haskell
 2-11—Peter Avellar
 2-18—Suzannah Nickerson
 2-21—Carol Keuch

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY
 2-3—Claire & Jay Thompson
 2-14—Suzanna Nickerson
 and Tom Sharkey

Pastor's Meditation: "Walking By Faith"

Dear Church Family and Friends ~

**"We live by faith, not by sight."
 2 Corinthians 5:7**

As we enter February, let us pause to thank God for how he has carried us by faith.

There are moments when answers don't come quickly, yet God remains faithful. Faith reminds us that God is working even when we can't see the outcome.

Walking by faith means trusting God beyond what is visible or predictable. Let February include moments that stretch us; faith assures us that God's promises are sure. He never asks us to walk alone, only to trust Him step by step.

In the month of February, be the church. We are a congregation that cares. As Christians we care about others and strive to share God's love with all people. We strive to be the church in real and tangible ways. For we all walk in faith . . .

Nothing can diminish the priceless worth of any human life. Every person is cherished and welcomed at the First United Methodist Church here in Chatham.

Remember this Valentines Day, true love originates from the heart of God. When God says "I love you, just listen and keep walking in faith.

Blessings and Happy Valentine's Day, Pastor Sonny.

OUR HELP IS NEEDED . . .

Volunteer Opportunities Abound at
 Broad Reach Hospice in the
 Chatham Area

"Perhaps you have the gifts of time and compassion for those who are journeying to the end of life.

"Perhaps you would be willing to share a few hours a week to provide companionship for someone under the care of Broad Reach Hospice.

"Perhaps you have a passion for music, art or other creative skills that would enhance quality of life for someone with Alzheimers.

"Broad Reach Hospice would welcome your inquiry. The Volunteer Coordinator would arrange a visit with you to discuss the details of the program and the online training experience.

"Please contact Karen Spangler at 508.945.4601, or email at: karenspangler@broadreachhealth.org, or www.broadreachhealth.org "



Lower Cape
 Community Development Partnership (CDP)
 "Stories that Inspire"

"A New Year. A Stronger Cape. An invitation to Lead."

"Last winter, a Lower Cape employer was in danger of losing a key team member of their kitchen staff and days away from going out of business. Not because the job wasn't good, but because there was nowhere affordable for them to live. A familiar story on the Lower Cape. What's less familiar is how it ended.

"Because of Community Development Partnership's housing, that employee and their family stayed. The business stayed open. And one more thread in the fabric of the Lower Cape Community held.

"That is the work of CDP. Quietly practical. Deeply human. And powered by the neighbors who care enough to raise their hand[s] and say count me in to make our towns affordable and somewhere we all can thrive. As we begin a New Year, CDP is **inviting more residents** of the Lower and Outer Cape to do exactly that by joining our **Advisory Council**. . . a group of committed community members from the Lower and Outer Cape who believe that housing stability, economic opportunity, and thriving local businesses are essential to the future of this place we love. Advisory Council members are not board

cont'd. on p. 4

***We Stand with
"Stand with Minnesota"***

An inspiring challenge from Bishop Bickerton:

I write these words tonight, January 24, 2026, with a very heavy heart.

Her name was Renee Macklin Good. She was fatally shot while in her SUV by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer on January 7 in Minneapolis, MN. She was 37 years old.

His name was Alex Jeffrey Pretti. While attempting to assist a woman who had been pepper sprayed, he was shot today by federal border patrol officers. He was an ICU nurse at a Veterans Administration hospital in Minneapolis, MN. He, too, was 37 years old.

My heart is heavy tonight, as it should be, that family members have lost loved ones and lives have been ended prematurely. My heart is heavy tonight, as it should be, because these two fatal shootings should have never happened.

But the heaviness in my heart tonight is more grievous because, in all likelihood, in just a few days or weeks, there will be another name on this list. And then another. And another.

Should I write a letter every time this happens? Perhaps I should. But letters penned from the comfort of my home seem all too shallow and ineffective. The words quickly fade as the stories of unjust and unnecessary acts of violence continue all around us. There must be something more.

Last week I had a conversation with Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey. Our conversation centered on all that is going wrong around us but, more importantly, we talked about how we might find creative ways to unite church and state to mobilize our people and meet the needs of the most vulnerable. It was a necessary conversation, and we pledged to have more—quickly. It was a good meeting. But there must be something more.

Not long ago I found myself in a conversation with another high ranking and experienced politician. We expressed mutual frustration over the very loud silence and ineffective pushback by politicians who oppose what's taking place in our country. I posed a critical but simple and genuine question: Where will the difference be made?

Their answer was also very simple and genuine: If we wait for high-ranking politicians to try to institute the changes necessary, we will find ourselves simply waiting and becoming more frustrated by the silence and the inaction. The answer, they said, is in a movement from the bottom up. The real change will happen when people in towns and communities and municipalities say, "*Enough is enough,*" and rise up to show how much they want to see a different country, a different world.

Tonight, I write an open letter to the people of the New Hope Episcopal Area, the churches, the clergy, and the laity of New England and New York. This is not a statement or a position paper. It is a challenge.

Some of us are protestors. Some of you do it well. It

comes naturally to you to participate in organized protests. It is an important action, and it is time for towns and communities to show how many of us are unhappy with the way things are. Training in non-violent resistance is critical and approaching protesting with the right objective in mind is essential. We must bring the core values of who we are as United Methodist Christians, finding ways, clear and intentional ways, to protest in love. Anything less than that is just what some are hoping for – chaos, unrest, and a reason to limit our rights and freedoms. If you protest, do it the right way and consider doing it now. But it's not enough.

Some of us are providers. Some of you do it well. It comes naturally to you. In nearly every town in this North-east corridor there is someone who is afraid, so afraid that they do not come out. They are not working or grocery shopping or attending school. They fear their home will be invaded and are terrified every time a whistle blows. They need someone to know their name, someone to have empathy, someone who is willing to help provide for their basic needs. Someone to be a friend. These personal connections offer a sense of hope amid great fear. Every church has some capacity to collect food, cook food, deliver food, take a child to school, check on a neighbor, and make a difference. If you are a provider, provide, and consider doing it now. But it's not enough.

Some of us are community organizers. Some of you do it well. It comes naturally to you. The ability to pull communities together from different denominations or individual agencies is of critical importance in these days of uncertainty and fear. To embrace the concept that we are stronger together is to pool our passions and our resources in a way that will provide a greater impact for the people who need it most. The need is glaring in some settings, more subdued in others, but it is present everywhere. If you are a community organizer, organize, and consider doing it now. But it's not enough.

Some of us are pray-ers. Some of you do it well. It comes naturally to you. Believing in and evoking the presence of God during times when there are few or no answers is of critical importance. In my last local church, one of our most influential leaders suffered a crippling stroke. When I visited with her, she lamented over how she would not be available to our church in what was a critical time for leadership. In our conversation I reminded her that perhaps her role was changing and that she could become our chief "intercessor" in prayer. She had the capacity to pray us through. And she did. I am convinced that her prayers bolstered and blessed the leaders of that church at one of the most important times in our history. If your gift is praying, it is time for you to pray, intentionally pray, and consider doing it now. But it's not enough.

All of us are residents of the United States of America. Those of you that are happy with the current state of affairs will not appreciate this letter. Perhaps you have already stopped reading it.

But for those of you who are not happy with the way things are going, it is time for us to do something that is of critical importance. Whether we are Democrat or Republican, progressive or moderate or conservative, it is time to

(con'td. p. 4)

CDP cont'd. from p. 2

members, and this is not a heavy lift. It is a way to stay meaningfully connected to CDP's work and to contribute in ways that match your passion, experience, and availability. Some [Advisory Council] members are longtime civic leaders. Others are business owners, professionals, or retirees who finally have the time to give back. Many are past or current clients of the CDP's programs. What they share is a desire to be useful and to make a real difference close to home.

"There is no single job description. Instead, members can choose how they engage," i.e., champion CDP in conversations; make introductions to people who are about housing and economic vitality; attend occasional briefings, tours, or gatherings to stay connected to CDP's impact; support fundraising efforts in ways that feel comfortable. All of this matters.

CDP projects include:

- Housing**—ADU Resource Center, Homeownership Through Education, Virtual First Time Homebuyers Workshop, Lower Cape Housing Institute;
- Project 365: Growing Community Leadership;**
- Property Management: Planning for the Future;**
- Supporting Local Business**—
- Business & Credit: Building Stronger Businesses, Workshops on QuickBooks Online, Food Safety Training, The Art of Business as a Creative.
- Expanding Child Care Options.**
- Strengthening Our Fisheries Economy.**

"If you are interested in **learning more** or starting the conversation now, please contact Chief Advancement Officer Jamie Bearse at JBearse@CapeCDP.org"

Jay Coburn, President & Chief Executive Officer

APPRECIATION GIVEN TO FUMC

We have received letters of grateful and sincere thanks from the following organizations for FUMC's generous donations :

- Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Stephen Miles Uzzo, PhD. President & Executive Director;
- Chatham Ecumenical Council Helping Prevent Homelessness, Mildred Hastbacka, Board Member and Past President;
- Lower Cape Outreach Council, Jim Kivlehan, Board President; and
- First Night Chatham, Bob Stuka

They all emphasize that they could not do their work without our support.

. . . Minnesota cont'd. from p. 3

declare that something is not right in our country.

Any time that anyone anywhere is shot, whether by an ICE official or a mass shooter, something is wrong. Any time injustice emerges, pain is inflicted, harm is done, there will be debate and disagreement. But here's the bottom line: If you do not agree with the current direction of our country, dividing ourselves politically and theologically will not help. We must demonstrate to ourselves and to the world that different people who think differently can work together for the common good. If you are a resident, it is time for us to say, *"Enough is enough"* and pull together to make a difference now when a difference is desperately needed.

Throughout this letter I have said that any particular step by itself is not enough. It's not enough because we need everyone's gifts and abilities to impact the change we long for.

Protesters criticize those that pray and those that pray criticize those that organize. Providers are called naïve and politicians are accused of being cynical. And I believe that's just what some want – disagreement, chaos, and disunity. As long as that continues internally, the change so many of us long for externally will never take place.

Please do not point the finger at those who respond in different ways. Point the finger at the problem and stay centered on the issue. Focus intentionally on how your gifts can be used in collaboration with others to get the job done. That's leadership. That's focus. That sets the stage for making a difference. That's embracing the reality that none of us can solve this alone. But together we might just stand a chance to recreate a *"more perfect union"* that, as the founders of our country wrote, *"would establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."*

That's not unlike what Jesus himself prayed, *"The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."* (John 17:22-33)

Hearts are heavy this night. But in the midst of our heaviness, let us band together as one body, bound in purpose, conviction, and love to make the difference we can make.

The Journey Continues . . .



Thomas J. Bickerton
Resident Bishop, New Hope Episcopal Area

"With faithfulness and the help of God, we can be instruments to bless the world."

The Upper Room Disciplines, 2026

CHAOS ALL AROUND

It isn't news that this world, including our country, is in chaos. In my opinion, it is fomented by our leadership and other leadership around the world that is uncaring for its inhabitants, is power hungry and greedy. What we can do as Christians is not lose the hope of our faith, and create "good trouble," to borrow a phrase from John Lewis. Again, in my opinion, but also that of many other Christians, it is our job to stand up against these powers, just as Jesus did and charged us to do. What follows is a report about one world area that we need to pray for and stand up for. (Ed.)

"A plea for 'costly solidarity' in [the] Middle East"

"A Jewish Israeli providing a protective presence for beleaguered Palestinian villagers in the West Bank says his courage is a 'gift from God.'"

"The authors of Kairos Palestine II use the phrase 'costly solidarity.' It's what Jesus meant by asking us to take up a cross and follow him . . ."

"MIDDLETOWN, Ohio (UM News) — How is God calling Christians to respond to the ongoing violence in the Middle East? The Rev. John Wagner, a pastor and former co-chair of United Methodists for Kairos Response, shares insights from the West Bank. 'What you think you know before traveling to the Middle East doesn't matter,' he writes. 'Once you've seen the plight of the people, 'you can't un-see it.'

"This past November, I was once again in the Middle East, my fourth trip since 2008 but my second in about a year. The main reason was to attend the unveiling of the Kairos Palestine II document, an urgent call from Palestinian Christians to address the violence. Christians from around the world, including four fellow United Methodists, were in Bethlehem to offer support.

[When I met the Jewish Israeli mentioned above, [I heard what he said] "as a testimony to the very real blessing that comes from hearing God's call and then being able to do one's duty, despite the cost. Jesus speaks to this in Matthew 19:29: 'And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my name's sake will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.'" In this man's case, it was risking his relationships by standing in solidarity with those who are grieving the loss of their land and their loved ones. And of course, I then have to ask myself that same inescapable question, namely, what might God be calling me to do just now? And I hope you are asking that same question as you read.

"I've received pushback for being an advocate for Palestinian rights, but mostly people want to tell me

I'm brave and thank me for taking a stand. Like most anyone, I like that kind of affirmation, but the better part of me is always wary. First off, I've not been that brave. The trips into the West Bank and the border to Gaza are organized by Palestinian Christians who are very savvy, and our safety is clearly of paramount importance. Secondly, I'm wary because such compliments seem to make me out to be the exception — admired perhaps, but still the exceptional person with an exceptional calling. That's not true.

"I had studied post-Holocaust theology and literature in graduate school, had visited Auschwitz in college, and was (and still am) openly sympathetic to Jewish trauma. But when I saw the occupation and met Palestinians who had suffered because of it, and Jewish Israelis who confirmed the truth about Israel's history, I changed.

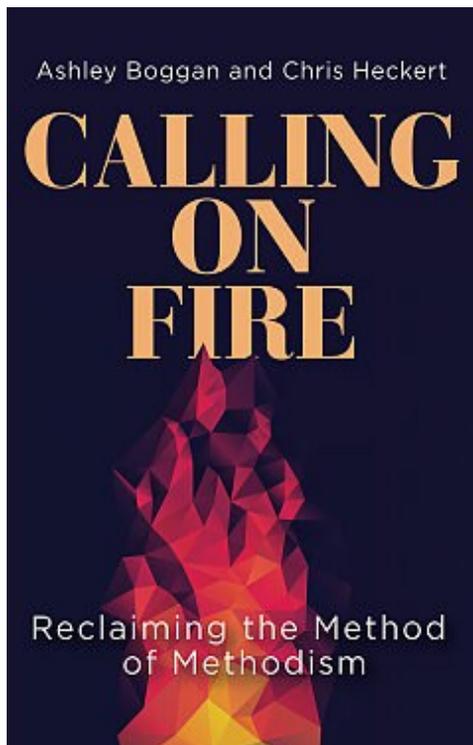
"Does it take a trip to Israel/Palestine to get motivated to take a stand for justice? It was probably necessary in my case, but my admiration is reserved mainly for those who haven't seen, and yet believe — something Jesus commended as well. Such Christians have trusted the testimony of our missionaries as well as the evidence now being shown very clearly on our computers and television screens. They've discerned for themselves that it isn't fake news.

"The other day I saw a video of a little girl lying on a makeshift hospital bed, a victim of the violence in Gaza. Her eyes were wide open in fear and bewilderment and my heart just automatically went out to her. Then came the devastating news that she had since died from burns over 90 percent of her body. I can't shake that image, and I know I'm not the only one. These and other videos and photos are motivating Christians and non-Christians to move out of their comfort zones and into some kind of protest. This is a good thing. There are many causes these days, many crosses to bear, violence and injustices near and far that must be addressed, and God bless you if you are already figuring out how to do that. I'm simply hoping that for some of you, this calling I'm describing might be a cross that you are personally willing to take up, a "costly solidarity" — whatever that might mean in your context — that is calling out to you just now.

"This world needs us to open ourselves to such costly encounters with the living Lord and then act on them." *Julie Dwyer, news editor, newdesk@umnews.org.*

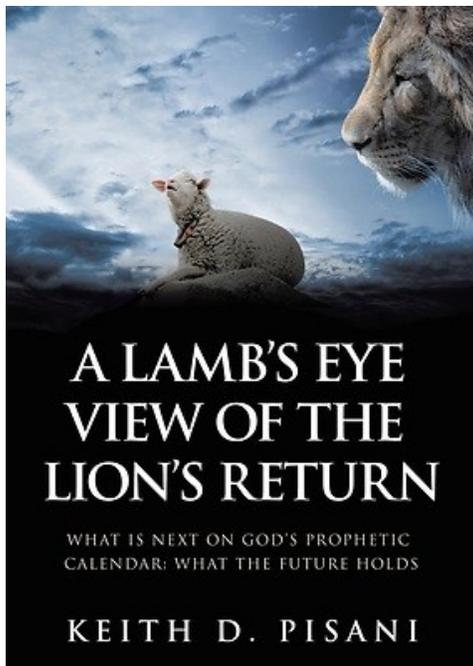
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Wagner is a semi-retired United Methodist pastor, currently serving part-time at Seven Mile United Methodist Church in the West Ohio Conference. He is also a founder and former co-chair of United Methodists for Kairos Response. For more information, you may reach him at johnwagnerumkr@gmail.com.



Our Seacoast District Superintendent, Rev. Wanda Santos-Perez, recently sent an email highlighting the book seen at left. She said the “Northeast Jurisdiction cabinets were tasked with reading this book in preparation for [an upcoming meeting],” and encouraged us “to check it out [because it proved] to be a refreshing read to begin the new year.”

See below an excerpt from John Wesley’s *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, which is quoted in *Calling On Fire* and “introduces the chapter on social engagement. One of four practices the authors coin, ‘The Wesleyan Practical Quadrilateral,’ for reclaiming the method of Methodism, [reminds] us that ‘Love has to spin outward.’”



Above all, remembering that God is love, [the Christian] is conformed to the same likeness. [They are] full of love to his neighbor: of universal love, not confined to one sect or party, not constrained to those who agree with them] in opinions, or in outward modes of worship, or to those who are allied to him by blood or recommended by nearness of place. Nor [do they] love those only who love [them], or are endeared to [them] by intimacy or acquaintance. But their love resembles that of [the God] whose mercy is over all his works. It soars above all those scanty bounds, embracing neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies; yes, not only to the good and gentle but also to the evil and unthankful.

--A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity, 1753.

In *A Lamb's Eye View of the Lion's Return*: “Have you ever looked around, scratched your head, and wondered if this world will survive another day? What is next on God's prophetic calendar? Will we survive? Will anyone survive? Does anything "have to happen" prior to the rapture, the tribulation, the second coming, the millennium, or the establishment of heaven on earth?

“Looking back at Scripture to look ahead to future events, "A Lamb's Eye View of the Lion's Return" gives us a sequential glimpse at God's prophetic calendar. Each event, described in Scripture, is explained using Bible passages to expose us to what happens next, after next, and even after that . . . the approach is to let the Bible speak for itself.” *Author*

CHURCH CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10am Worship/ Communion. POT LUCK LUNCHEON	2	3 8:30-9:30 Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 9:30—Meditation in Heberton Rm. 10-11:30 Faith Study in Peace Room	4	5 8:30-9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 9:30—Meditation in Heberton Rm. 11-2 Thrift Shop and Food Pantry OPEN	6 11-2 Thrift Shop and Food Pantry OPEN	7 11-2 Thrift Shop and Food Pantry OPEN
8 10am Worship	9	10 8:30-9:30 Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 9:30—Meditation in Heberton Rm. 10-11:30 Faith Study in Peace Room	11 3:00 Finance & Trustees	12 8:30-9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 9:30—Meditation in Heberton Rm. 11-2 Thrift Shop and Food Pantry OPEN	13 11-2 Thrift Shop and Food Pantry OPEN	14 11-2 Thrift Shop and Food Pantry OPEN
15 10am Worship	16 Joyce Lance is on vacation this week	17 8:30-9:30 Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 9:30—Meditation in Heberton Rm. 10-11:30 Faith Study in Peace Room MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	18	19 8:30-9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 9:30—Meditation in Heberton Rm. 11-2 Thrift Shop and Food Pantry OPEN	20 11-2 Thrift Shop and Food Pantry OPEN	21 11-2 Thrift Shop and Food Pantry OPEN
22 10am—Worship	23	24 8:30-9:30 Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 9:30—Meditation in Heberton Rm. 10-11:30 Faith Study in Peace Room	25	26 8:30-9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 9:30—Meditation in Heberton Rm. 11-2 Thrift Shop and Food Pantry OPEN	27 11-2 Thrift Shop and Food Pantry OPEN	28 11-2 Thrift Shop and Food Pantry OPEN



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