

Gillespie Methodist Church

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Pastor's Corner

I made quite a fuss when I turned 29; I joked that my life was flashing before my eyes. Those who had lived already to the age of 29 twice or thrice certainly thought I was overreacting! They assured me that 30 is still quite young. I think I may have believed them.

On July 4, 2026, our country will turn 250 years old. That's a big number! Yet, just like my turning 30, the United States of America really isn't as old as it may seem. Sure, we are older than the Federal Republic of Germany (formed after WWII). But older than the Holy Roman Empire, which became modern Germany? By no means. Older than India? Negatory. China? Not by a long shot. Our nation is still a youthful sprout nestled among the greybeards of the world's great civilizations and societies.

It is not my intention during Pastor's Corner to violate our longstanding tradition of separation between church and state. Yet every church, every Christian, has a context—and mine is the US of A. We have a fascinating history, and the US has undoubtedly played a significant role on the world's stage. Perhaps nothing is more interesting than the story of our founding, and the ideas that went into it—especially the ones inspired by the Judeo-Christian tradition.

(continued on p. 2)

Pastor's Corner (continued from p. 1)

I recall a conversation I had with a British woman during my trip to Munich. She noted the uniqueness of America's founding, the fact that such a moment of coming together to form the groundwork of a society is almost unheard of. She's right. Most societies grow naturally. Great Britain, as an example, emerged slowly over time. The Anglo-Saxons consolidated into one people—the English—only to be conquered by the Normans, who gradually assimilated. King John signed the Magna Carta in 1215, a document which promised protection of church rights, protections against illegal imprisonments, and limitations to the King's rights to levy taxes from his nobles. Sound familiar? John Wesley's Britain of the 18th century, with its bicameral Parliament, limited monarchy, and trial-by-jury system (a legacy of Anglo-Saxon England), grew slowly and organically from the original society of Germanic tribes which migrated to the island in the 5th century AD. That is how it goes for nearly every major civilization: the Holy Roman Empire becomes Germany, the Indus valley civilization becomes India, Kiev Russ becomes Russia—and so forth. As they morph, so too does their form of governance. But they always carry over something from the last one, and the end result represents something of an archeological site—layer upon layer of law and tradition, some of them quite strange (did you know that until 1998, in order to raise a 'point of order' in the British House of Commons, you had to put on a top hat? True story!)

Not so with the United States. We certainly grew from the British colonies—but there was also a clean break. A demarcation. A unique moment in time in which the leaders of this burgeoning nation held its future in their hands, hands which wielded the incredible power to shape its future for generations to come.

While the revolutionaries were certainly upset about taxes—especially considering their lack of representation in Parliament—the vision of the new nation looked much farther than that. Thomas Jefferson, quoting British philosopher Thomas Locke, wrote these immortal words:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

Locke had originally written "property," rather than "happiness." Since I believe happiness is more of a by-product of a life lived in the Lord, and not exactly an end-in-itself, I have often wished that Jefferson would have stuck with Locke's original quote. At any rate, Jefferson went on to write,

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men.

That sentence contains only ten words, 54 letters, and two punctuation marks, but don't let it fool you! Jefferson and the founders was proposing a radically new idea. To illustrate, I'll share a story with you about King Charles—and not the one you see on TV!

(continued on p. 3)

Pastor's Corner (continued from p. 2)

Charles I of England lost his head (not figuratively—quite literally!) in 1649 because he refused to disavow the “divine right of kings.” Throughout European history, and in other civilizations, the right to govern was believed to be given by God to the monarch. You were then considered a “subject” of the monarch, who had the “divine right” to govern you. Ergo, whatever the monarch said, went...or so Charles I thought!

For the first time in human history, a government would be instituted which recognized the rights of mankind as coming not from God *via* the King, but rather, *from God Himself*. Rather than the subjects being held accountable to a monarch governing the people with “a divine right,” the tables would be turned: the *government* would be held accountable to the *people* who had divine rights—“unalienable” rights, rights that cannot be abdicated or taken away, rights given to them by God.

As I observe our nation reaching its 250th birthday, I reflect back on America’s history. Has the country always held up to those immortal words from Jefferson? No. Counting enslaved Africans as 3/5th as a means of balancing power between the North and the South, the Trail of Tears, and the internment of Japanese American citizens during WWII certainly don’t count as premier examples of the recognition of human dignity. No government, no society, is perfect. Yet one does not have to be perfect to be a step above the alternatives.

As I read the words Jefferson wrote 250 years ago, I still find it hard not to feel goosebumps along my arm. In the words of one of my favorite interpreters of early American History, Nicholas Cage in the movie National Treasure: “people don’t talk that way anymore.”

I have had the distinct honor of visiting Arlington National Cemetery once in my lifetime. Long rows of white marble headstones testify to the fact that countless generations of Americans have believed in these founding principles, and the words which Jefferson wrote. For a country which separates church from state, we Americans are quick to answer to the call to protect and defend our God-given rights to, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They are rights which come to us not because the Declaration of Independence says so, or the Constitution says so, but because God says so.

One day, you and I will be citizens not here in America, but somewhere else. We will be citizens of a New Jerusalem, the city which John saw descending from Heaven in his vision from God. In an ironic twist of fate (for an American, at least) we will once again be subjects—with Jesus as our Lord. We will reign with him in his Kingdom. We won’t have a flag, or a 4th of July, or even a constitution. Instead, we will have all we ever need: Jesus.

(continued on p. 4)

Pastor's Corner (continued from p. 3)

Until then, as Jefferson wrote, "governments are instituted among men to secure these rights...." We will have national boundaries, national anthems, and national sports teams until the day when Jesus returns. There are many great nations on this earth, and I consider myself blessed to be a citizen of this one. I pray that the 250th birthday of our country will be a time of unity and celebration in our society. I pray that we God will grant us to see His image in each other—the very same image that grants us our unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

God bless you, and God bless America.

In Christ,

Pastors Logan & Jacey

Pastor Logan's Ordination

We are excited to announce that Pastor Logan was ordained on June 8, 2026. We celebrated this special occasion on Sunday, June 14th. Congratulations on this important milestone in your ministry Pastor!

We invite everyone to keep Pastor Logan in your prayers as he begins this new chapter of service and leadership.



GMC Rocks Painting Party

We had 13 adults and 2 kids join us on June 7th to paint 69 rocks. Everyone had a great time and the rocks are now hidden in Gillespie and the surrounding areas for people to find and log on our GMC Rocks! Facebook page. Keep checking in to see if your rock has been found. Linda V's beautiful insect rock has been in 3 states already!! I honestly don't know if we had more fun painting the rocks or hiding them!!



GMC Rocks!

Check out our new Facebook page.
Gillespie and the surrounding areas have been **ROCKED!**

If you find one just scan the QR code on the rock and log your found treasure on the Facebook page.
Keep it or rehide it for someone else to find.

Let's see how far the GMC rocks can travel.

Find us on Facebook! Search: GMC Rocks



2:18 Missions Cookout

2:18 Mission Team will be having a cookout out at Randy's in Benld on Saturday, July 18th, from 10:00am-1:00 pm.



Harvest Feast

Harvest Feast dinner will be Wednesday, July 29th at 5-6:30 pm. Come out and enjoy a delicious meal, dine in or carry out!

Father's Day Slideshow

Thank you to everyone who sent in a Dad picture for the Father's Day slide show. A HUGE thank You to Will for organizing all the photos and picking just the right song to accompany the pictures for the program. There wasn't a dry eye in the sanctuary!!



Summer Reading Group

In lieu of a summer bible study, join pastors Logan and Jacey for a summer reading group! We will be reading a thought-provoking book by Rabbi David Fohrman, *The Exodus You Almost Passed Over*.

The book is divided into four sections. We will discuss Part I at our first meeting on July 24th at 5:00 pm at the parsonage; the pastors will provide supper. If you're interested, please add your name to the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

Mission Quarters

2026 mission quarters will be donated to the following causes:

- July **Henderson Food Drive**
- August Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- September Harvest Feast
- October Care Center
- November Joyful Angels
- December Salvation Army

Vacation Bible School

This year at VBS, students “traveled to Rome,” where they learned about Paul and the underground church. Through engaging skits and dramatic reenactments, students saw Bible stories brought to life while deepening their understanding of the early church and the persecution of Christians. Students were excited to visit Paul in prison each day, as well as visiting Christians hidden in a cave. Students saw and heard Roman soldiers who were looking for Christians. They witnessed one of the soldiers, Paul’s prison guard, have a change of heart and become a Christian! They learned that nothing can separate us from God’s love!

Aside from learning these Bible stories, students participated in arts and crafts, recreation, music, and had snacks that went along with the Bible stories. Students collected tokens with the week’s Bible verses, had photos taken in Roman togas and accessories, and received Bibles and/or Christian books to take home with them at the end of the week. On Friday students performed the songs they had learned for their families. They finished the day with bounce houses and hot dog lunches with their families.

The ministry for the week was a collection of money and food for local blessing boxes with a friendly competition between girls and boys. Each food item was counted as \$1. A total of \$250 was raised!

Each day we had 56–78 kids and around 30 helpers that we were able to share lessons and the love of Jesus with!

We would like to thank everyone who had a role in helping with VBS. We are blessed with a congregation and community full of helping hearts and hands. If you have never helped with VBS you might not realize what it takes to make it so successful or how many people it takes. We had people donate supplies and funds. We had helpers planning, making, and serving snacks, cooking hot dogs, and packing lunches. We had helpers teaching the song lyrics and motions. We had helpers out in the heat planning, directing, and refereeing games. We had helpers planning, preparing supplies, and walking students through arts and crafts. We had helpers in the marketplace helping students “make purchases” to make small crafts or do activities, while also sharing and reinforcing the lessons learned in the Bible stories. We had helpers registering students online and in person, making nametags, creating and showing slideshows. We had volunteers who set up and decorated and volunteers who took everything back down. We had helpers who acted out the Bible stories to make them come to life for the students. We had people who took care of boo-boo’s and kiddos who missed their mommies. And while all of that seems like a lot, I have probably missed some things. Despite there being so many hands on things that need done, perhaps the biggest help of all is your prayers. Even with the best laid plans, things go wrong but it always works out. We had a great turnout! The kids all had a great time and learned a lot! So, in whatever way you helped, you are appreciated! It takes a village and we could not do this without all of you! Thank you!



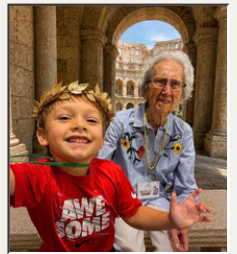
RECREATION



CHRISTIANS IN THE CAVE



2022



2026



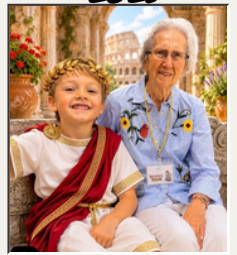
GRACE + HARPER



SONGS



PAUL + BRUTUS



2026



VBS
2026



KITCHEN CREW

CELEBRATE FREEDOM!
Celebrate Responsibly!

HAVING A 4TH OF JULY PARTY?

DROP OFF YOUR EMPTY ALUMINUM CANS AT THE
EVERY CAN COUNTS!

COMMUNITY CAN COLLECTION DROPBOX

GILLESPIE METHODIST CHURCH

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO HARVEST FEAST
TO HELP OFFSET THE COST OF THE MONTHLY MEAL FOR THE LESS FORTUNATE IN THE COMMUNITY.

★ Celebrate. Give Back. Make a Difference. ★
★ THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY! ★

YOUR CANS MATTER!

IN JUST 8 WEEKS WE SAVED

243 POUNDS OF ALUMINUM CANS

\$174.96

100% OF PROCEEDS goes to help fund

the HARVEST FEAST MISSION
PROVIDING A FREE MEAL for those in need.

EVERY CAN MATTERS - YOU MATTER!

THANK YOU for making a difference!

Ice Cream Social

The Heritage Community Bank will be playing on Sunday, July 19th starting at 5:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Sloppy Joes, chips, and drinks will be available for purchase. Ice cream and all of the toppings are free. Always a fun time!



Congratulations Graduates

Congratulations to Scott Pollo and Lydia Lowry on their graduation from 8th grade and to Wyatt Rondi on his graduation from high school. We pray you will find great success in your futures! We are so proud of you all!



Want to know the secret to Florence Dane's long life?

She'll tell you it's her strong faith in our Lord-- and her low-fat, sugar-free Pineapple Cheesecake!

Give it a try and *you* just might live to be 101+...but who's counting?

You can find this delightful recipe on pages 128-129 in the Bread of Life Methoist Church cookbook.

**Pineapple Cheesecake, Low Fat–Sugar Free**

8 oz. pkg. cream cheese

1 Tbsp. liquid sweetener or 1 ½ cups Splenda or sugar

1 tsp. vanilla

1 small can crushed pineapple

1 pkg. sugar free lemon jello

1 cup whipping cream

1 pkg. graham crackers, crushed

¼ cup soft butter or oleo

¼ cup sugar or Splenda (optional)

Mix graham crackers, butter, and sugar or Splenda. Spread in pie pan and bake at 375 for 8 minutes. Mix cream cheese, vanilla, and pineapple well. Dissolve th lemon jello in ½ cup boiling water. Chill until syrupy or like unbeaten egg whites. Stir in cheese mixture. Whip the whipping cream until stiff peaks form. Fold in cream cheese mixture. Pour into graham cracker crust and chill.

Support for Brenda

Brenda has recently begun cancer treatment. Brenda faithfully serves our church and community; now we have the opportunity to serve her. Our church family can help by making dinners for her and Mark to ease that burden for them. Make a meal and drop it off or gift cards for food and gas are also welcome. She will greatly appreciate it! Also please say prayers for Brenda and Mark daily as we know it's in Gods hand and he will take care of our beautiful friend!

To sign up to deliver a meal use the following website:

<https://www.giveinkind.com/inkinds/KOJ7M2J>





Birthdays & Anniversaries

July Birthdays

7th William Lehotz
13th Jaclyn Stewart Knetzer
17th Pete Stromsland
18th Stephen Demartini
19th Lainey Ambrose
21st Amilya Jack
25th Dylan Mason
26th Alex Easton
27th Roy Hildebrand
28th Randy Rose
29th Wyatt Rondi
30th Kaeleb Lowry
30th Kolton Lowry
31st Ashton Bethard
31st Brooklynne Claro

July Anniversaries

3rd Shawn & Sam Jack
15th Nick & Ashley Bryarly
18th Mark & Brenda Lowe
21st Kyle & Deanna Lowry
28th Jeff & Rachel Bethard

Marriage Advice

“Put God first in your marriage and house.”



Pastors Logan and Jacey Zepp
Stacey Keck
Dixie Lamparter
Hudson Garwood
(U.S. Navy training)
Phil Kelmel
Donna Easton
Ashley
Camden
Joe Bertetto

Brenda Lowe
Unsaved
Those battling addiction
Those dealing with mental health
issues
Service men & women
First responders
Our nation

*The prayer list will be cleared and started over each month. If you have a prayer request that is ongoing and should be included in multiple months' newsletters, please let me know. Prayer requests may be emailed to me at rbethard728@gmail.com or given to me in person.

Thank you, -Rachel

JULY



2026

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
			1 Ginger Snap Day	2 World UFO Day	3 Eat Your Beans Day	4 Independence Day
5 Apple Turnover Day	6 Fried Chicken Day	7 Macaroni Day	8 Chocolate with Almonds Day	9 Sugar Cookie Day	10 Pina Colada Day	11 Cheer up the Lonely Day
12 Pecan Pie Day	13 French Fry Day	14 Tape Measure Day	15 Tapioca Pudding Day	16 Corn Fritter Day	17 Peach Ice Cream Day	18 Toss Away the "Could have" or "Should have"
19 National Ice Cream Day	20 Lollipop Day	21 Junk Food Day	22 Hammock Day	23 Hot Dog Day	24 Drive Thru Day	25 Hot Fudge Sundae Day
26 Aunt & Uncle Day	27 Creme Brulee Day	28 Milk Chocolate Day	29 Lasagna Day	30 Cheesecake Day	31 Raspberry Cake Day	

July 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 America's 250 th Anniversary
5	6 Bible Study 1:30-2:30pm	7	8 UMW 9am	9	10	11
12	13 Bible Study 1:30-2:30pm Trustees meeting 7pm	14	15	16	17	18 2:18 Mission Team Cookout at Randy's 10am-1pm
19 Ice Cream Social featuring Heritage Community Band 5pm	20 Bible Study 1:30-2:30pm Finance meeting 6:30pm Ad board meeting 7pm *Newsletter items due	21	22	23	24 Summer Reading group meets at parsonage 5pm	25
26	27 Bible Study 1:30-2:30pm NOW Committee meeting 6pm	28	29 Harvest Feast 5-6:30 pm	30	31	