



# MESSENGER



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF TITUSVILLE  
206 S. HOPKINS AVE, TITUSVILLE, FL 32796  
AUGUST 2022

## Methodism reimagined: connecting the dots

July 12th, 2022

By Matt Rawle

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/11396/methodism-reimagined-connecting-the-dots>

As we look ahead to reimagine Methodist identity into the future, given the realities of uncertainty and confusion—as well as new possibilities for purpose, belonging, and growth—and given the deep impacts of the last two years on church life more broadly, MinistryMatters is committed to helping you imagine a church called to be God’s future in the present.

To help our readers imagine that, we are asking leading pastors, thinkers, and teachers in our denomination to reflect on their own journey in and through this time of uncertainty.

In this ongoing series called “Methodism Reimagined,” we are sharing the tools, practices, and perspectives that pastors are using right now to help them and their

congregation move forward into a future that is bigger than the past.

In this article, the second of two parts, Rev. Matt Rawle looks ahead from how the center of nine gives us a way to analyze how we can perceive new ways of connecting with one another in both the excitement of innovation and the realities of grief. We hope Rev. Rawle gives you help in reimagining your ministry for the future.

In my previous article I argued that the church, along with many other institutions, finds itself in the center of nine intersecting cultural circles. Three sets of three, all vying for our attention, all at once. As a refresher, the industrial age, information age, and augmented age all exist in the same space. Our shared Covid experiences are expressed through traumatic innovation, existential exhaustion, and nostalgic scarcity. Finally, how we commune and belong in community lies at the center of pipeline, ecosystem,

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HELLO

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*M. Rawle*

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and abiding. Three different “ages,” three different covid marathons, and three distinct ways of connecting with each other, all happening at the same time. No wonder we are all exhausted! It's important to recognize our cultural reality, but what are we supposed to do about it? As communities of faith, how do we navigate these mountainous truths with the canoes of what we think we know?

Have you ever played “connect the dots?” Maybe in an old coloring book or an elementary school laptop or app? You know, where there's a series of seemingly random dots, that if connected in the right order, offers a picture you couldn't see before. In this new reality the dots are the same. There are some things that don't change in our missional work, like personal invitations to gatherings, breaking bread with a neighbor, singing a good song, and offering a captivating message; however many of these dots are being connected in new, and often unfamiliar ways. If we connect these dots in the “right” order, we just might have an exciting, life-giving movement on our hands.

### **Holding the Both/And Tension of Grief and Excitement**

Many faith communities are quite familiar with a both/and reality, especially with worship.

Many congregations stream worship online while also having people in the pews (for more on this, check out Jason Moore's Both/And work). Think about your weekly offering. On any given Sunday you probably have offering baskets and QR codes for online giving. You probably register attendance with both cards in the pews and google forms on phones. The both/and world is becoming quite familiar, but often overlooked is the responsibility to recognize that both/and is not just about logistics. Living into this tension elicits a pastoral response. Many are feeling left behind with the quickly changing technological landscape, and with this dramatic change there is grief.

One of most popular gatherings in my congregation is called Burnt Offerings—a mission fundraiser that includes a cooking competition, live auction, live music, and silent auction. The silent auction, one the top money-makers of the evening, used to be a collection of items in the church lobby, each with a clipboard with names, numbers, and bids. A few years ago we moved the silent auction to be exclusively online via a bidding app. The items were still in the lobby, but you could only bid and pay over your phone. I thought it was an amazing idea. Many were excited about the change, namely our silent auction team. When the deadline for

bidding had elapsed we instantly knew who won each item, we didn't have to fool with collecting checks or making change, and we could send announcements immediately to all participants. Unfortunately, not everyone was so enthused with the technological advancement we had made. In fact, most of the largest bidders weren't pleased. Many didn't want to fool with downloading anything to their smartphone, others were concerned with the security of inputting financial information into a third-part application, but the problem really wasn't about the technology. Removing the clipboards felt like I had removed the participants, themselves, from the experience.

We must hold in tension both the grief and excitement of this new augmented landscape. Many for the first time feel like the church is listening to them. Creating discord servers, developing space in the metaverse, and investing in digital currencies a means through which the church is serving a new generation, but it shouldn't be at the expense of those currently in our communities. It's not about the technology, but it is about the connection (or lack thereof) technologies affords. So, for a time, we need both clipboards and apps, discord bots and good old fashioned phone calls. Is this exhausting? You bet! But there's not an app on the market that can heal a hurting soul who feels forgotten. We must connect the dots between what technology can do and how technology makes us feel.

### **The Price of Adaptive Change**

Twenty or so years ago there was a church that had experienced their “golden” years: substantial growth, groundbreaking mission, facility expansion, and influential community leadership. The pastor who led during this time of abundance was appointed to another congregation, and with his predecessor came great strife. The next several years offered division, antagonism, and depending on who you ask, great trauma. Since this shake-up, the congregation seemed to find some reason or another to ask the pastor to start packing every four to five years. Why? With each new tenure the next pastor was being asked, explicitly or quietly in the hallways in between meetings, to recapture the past. The incoming pastor's vision was never enough. It never could be because repeating the past is impossible. It is not an altogether bad thing to desire the best practices of a fruitful time. Connect-the-dots puzzles are a tried and true children's exercise, but if you're hoping to find a connect-the-dots book within walking distance from your home at a neighborhood corner news stand, your walk will probably end in disappointment.

Congregations tempted to reclaim past mission and

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# July Budget Spending Summary

The Finance Committee appreciates your contributions and donations. With your support we will be able to continue sharing God's love with those around us.

## Income

Total Income: \$32,202  
Monthly Budgeted Goal: \$39,459  
*Income Under Goal:* \$7,257

## Expenses

Church Programs: \$70  
Finance: \$664  
Church Administration: \$1857  
Facility Maintenance: \$12,143  
Personnel: \$21,987  
Conference Apportionments: \$0  
*Total Expenses:* \$36,721

**Income under Expenses: \$4,519**

The budget for 2022 is **\$473,502** which, divided evenly, makes each month's goal \$39,459 rather than being weighted differently throughout the year. Although we have begun trying to cut expenses where we reasonably can, we are still feeling the financial pinch from the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are able to still contribute during these lean times, please help us to maintain our regular operating costs as you find you are able. Only with the generosity of our congregation have we been able to weather the storms of the past and even the current storm we are in.

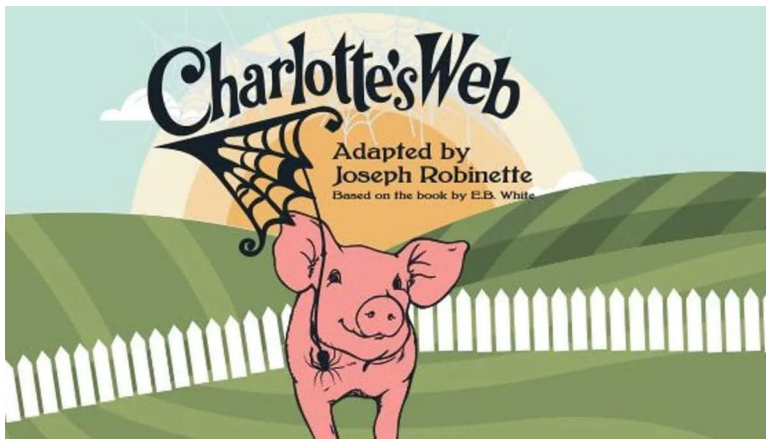
Thank you for your loving generosity in keeping this church operating!

## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

1 Bob Titus	21 Caroline Sandusky	26 Carole Copeland
7 Joy Brady	22 Rita Clark	27 Trudy Metzger
10 Patty Mooney-Hildebrand	22 Sue Whitson	28 Gary Pittman
15 Nancy Boffo	24 Eva Jenkins	29 Jonah Thomas
19 Carol Henn	25 Jan Gilreath	31 Peggy Moyer

## AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

10 Larry & Jan Gilreath	24 Jackie & Imogene Smith
17 Duane & Nancy Tornadoen	28 Billy & Ruth White
18 Bill & Natalie Walls	28 Michael & Nancy Boffo
20 Michael & Jennifer Evans	31 Arthur & Rosann Faull
23 John & Carol Stephens	32 George & Fran Nolan



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vision are in a particularly difficult context today. As I mentioned in my previous article, we are all running the third great Covid marathon which I call, “Nostalgic Scarcity,” the desire to reclaim the past through already limited resources. Nostalgic Scarcity might be an unfamiliar phrase, but “let’s get ‘back to,’” and “This is how we used to do it,” I’m sure resonate with a slight traumatic tremor. Churches who want to “get back to” are doubling down on creating an environment to enshrine the past. It is my suspicion that our current Methodist talks of separation are the result, in part, of this third Covid marathon. Enshrining the past is not a bad thing, but it is the job of museums, not the calling of churches.

Adaptive change will be waiting for us at the Covid marathon finish line, and with adaptive change there is always a cost. The congregation that seeks new leadership every several years entered into new worshipful practices and the embrace of different experiences, and as a result, the pastor is still there. The cost of adaptive change is often loss. Several church members left when the pastor failed to invest in creating a “get back to” environment; however it seems that the congregation has never been healthier. The worshiping congregation is certainly slimmer, but also more nimble, more missionally engaged, and frankly happy. We must connect the dots between what will bring us into a more fruitful future with the recognition that not everything will join us on that journey.

### **Yellow is a Silly Color**

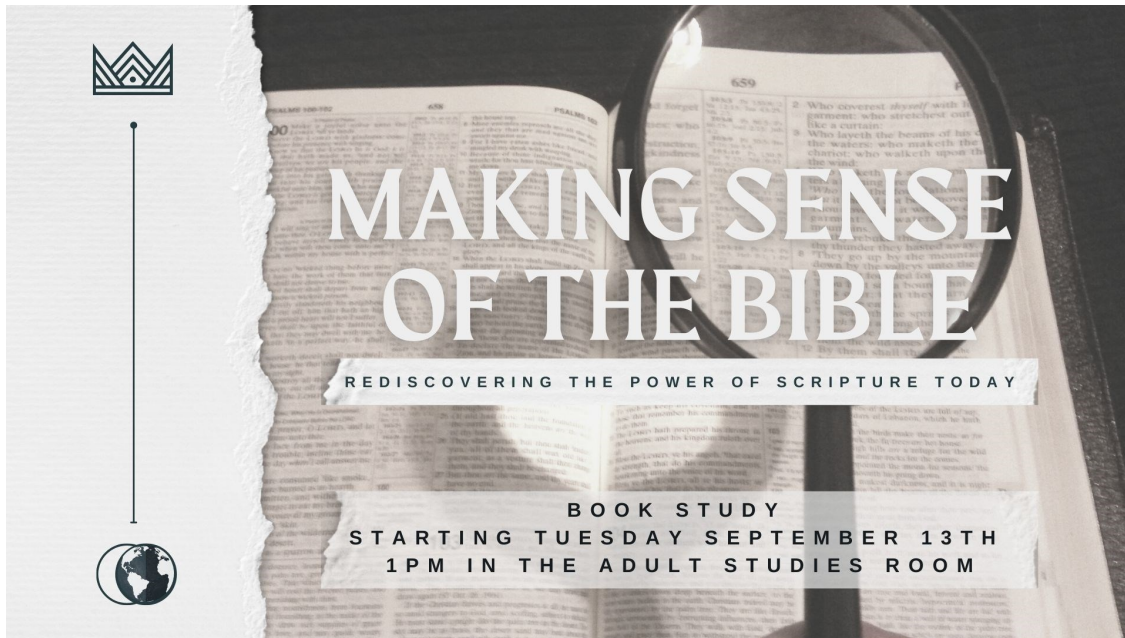
My oldest daughter is the artist of the family. She had a fascination with color as soon as she was able to doodle and scribble on her own. One day she asked me, “Daddy, why is yellow a silly color?” On the surface “Why is yellow a silly color?” sounds, well, silly. Colors can’t be silly or sad or angry or mad. At least, that’s what we adults tell ourselves. I love that my daughter had already assumed that yellow is a silly color. She wasn’t questioning that. She was wondering why it was the way it was. The beauty of her question is that her four-year-old brain was connecting the dots between color and emotion. She didn’t ask if the connection could or even should be made. She assumed it, and that is precisely what the church of tomorrow must do.

In October 2020, the Disruptors podcast featured an

interview with Dr. James Canton, director of the Institute of Global Futures out of San Francisco. He detailed what he believes to be the top five new technologies that will change the world: nano technology, synthetic biology, information technology, neuroscience, and quantum computing. Each one of the disciplines, outside of being incredibly complex for this pastor’s brain to comprehend, in their own individual way can radically change how we think, do, work, and play. His point is not about the technologies themselves, but the importance of how these technologies have to work together. It’s not enough to have a quantum computer, but having a quantum computer connected with neuroscience might help us solve incredibly complex issues like Alzheimer’s. Nano technology is one thing, but connecting nano technology with biology would revolutionize surgery and delivery of medicine.

As I mentioned in my previous piece, discipleship continues to move into a more personal and isolated place. From linear pipeline to ecosystem to personally abiding, discipleship is becoming more siloed to the individual at the expense of community. There’s nothing wrong with crafting a specific and meaningful pathway for those searching for Christ, but the church must always be about bringing community together. Sometimes that means knowing that yellow is a silly color. In other words, the children’s ministry director might be the perfect person to lead the building campaign, or sometimes sermon prep is best done at the food pantry. Even better, what dots are being connected outside of the church from which the church can learn. Neighborhood cookouts, fitness classes, community college festivals, etc. What connections need to be made that aren’t immediately obvious?

The good news is that as leaders in the church we are not called to be innovated, witty, or clever. We simply need to be where the people are. We need to connect the dots between the excitement of innovation with the sorrow of grief. We need to connect the dots between the fruitfulness of moving into the future with the loss from adaptive change. We need to connect the dots between innovative technology and the people the technology should serve. When we appropriately connect the dots we will see the shape of a cross. It may have been hard to see at first in the midst of exhaustion and rapid change, but it is our faith that it is there. How are you being called to connect the dots?



**Annual Church Conference**  
Monday, October 10, 2022  
4:00pm

Our annual church conference will be held on Monday, October 10th at 4pm in our sanctuary. You are invited to attend. At Church Conference, we will be voting on aspects of our operation that take place at the local church level.



The days are longer and the weather is warmer!  
It's time to celebrate summer!

Join your friends from First United Methodist Church of Titusville and Connection Kids at 206 S Hopkins Ave for a time of fun with food, friends and family!

We will have water slides, music, and games for the whole family!

Bring the whole crew and have a great time with us!

# August 2022

## First United Methodist Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 2:30pm Sit & Fit 6:00pm Soliloquy 8:00pm Broadstreet	<b>3</b> 9:00am Patchwork Friends 3:30pm Joyful Noise Rehearsal 6:00pm Vivos Voco Rehearsal	<b>4</b> 10:00am Conn. Kids Party	<b>5</b> 11am Ladies Day Out 1-3pm Food Pantry	<b>6</b> 7:30am Garden Club 8:00am Comm. Breakfast 10:00am End of Summer Bash
<b>7</b> 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	<b>8</b> 10:00am Sara Fernandez Bible Study	<b>9</b> 2:30pm Sit & Fit 8:00pm Broadstreet	<b>10</b> 3:30pm Joyful Noise Rehearsal 6:00pm Vivos Voco Rehearsal	<b>11</b> 10:30am Retired Teachers Mtg	<b>12</b> 1-3pm Food Pantry	<b>13</b> 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
<b>14</b> 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 2:30pm Sit & Fit 6:00pm Soliloquy 8:00pm Broadstreet	<b>17</b> 9:00am ADK 1:30pm Staff Meeting 3:30pm Joyful Noise Rehearsal 6:00pm Vivos Voco Rehearsal	<b>18</b> 4:00pm Leadership Team Mtg	<b>19</b> 9:30am Ladies Day Out 1-3pm Food Pantry	<b>20</b> 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
<b>21</b> 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 2:30pm Sit & Fit 6:00pm Soliloquy 8:00pm Broadstreet	<b>24</b> 3:30pm Joyful Noise Rehearsal 6:00pm Vivos Voco Rehearsal	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 1-3pm Food Pantry	<b>27</b> 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
<b>28</b> 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 2:30pm Sit & Fit 6:00pm Soliloquy 8:00pm Broadstreet	<b>31</b> 3:30pm Joyful Noise Rehearsal 6:00pm Vivos Voco Rehearsal			

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### FUMC Staff

Reception Desk	Ext 201
Rev. Wayne Cook - Pastor	Ext 202
Mario Davis - Administrative Assistant	Ext 203
Glenda Waring - Membership Secretary	Ext. 204
Leah Patterson - Finance Secretary	Ext. 204
Lauren Peterson - Family Ministries	Ext. 205
Tom Mosier - Facilities Manager	Ext. 206
Leah Patterson—Custodian	Ext. 206
Carol Henn - Music Director	
J.D. Daniel - Organist	
Steve Rossi - Sound Tech	
Josh Huss - Lights and Visuals	
Dr. Bob Titus - Pastor Emeritus	

### **First United Methodist Church**

206 S. Hopkins Ave  
Titusville, FL 32796

Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.

Worship Services: 10:00 a.m.

Church Office Hours: 8am – 4pm, Monday - Friday  
Closed from 12:00 – 12:30 p.m.

Phone: (321) 269-7631

Fax: (321) 269-8359

E-mail Address: [office@fumctitusville.com](mailto:office@fumctitusville.com)

Website: [www.fumctitusville.com](http://www.fumctitusville.com)

Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/682694095204027](https://www.facebook.com/682694095204027)

Twitter Handle: [@MethodistFirst](https://twitter.com/MethodistFirst)

Instagram Handle: [@UnitedChurch321](https://www.instagram.com/UnitedChurch321)

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCChscOcLDe-wGkXHftvzGX9Q>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCChscOcLDe-wGkXHftvzGX9Q>

