

The Circuit Rider

Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church *November, 2026*

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Living in Hope

For all the Saints who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed;
Thy name, oh Jesus, be forever blessed.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

Years ago…when I was moving into graduate school at Boston University, my Great Grandmother asked if she could join us on the trip to Boston as she had never traveled that far north in her life (she was 93). I said yes, of course. Upon our arrival we learned that my room was on the third floor of Theology House and there was no way my grandma would be able to climb all those stairs. The brownstone was not ADA approved. Yet, on that day something amazing happened. Two sturdy young men stepped up and created a "chair" lift out of their arms and carried her up those stairs. The remainder of the day, grandma sat and directed while my belongings were brought up stairs. New seminarians stopped by the room to meet her. She blessed them with her inquisitiveness and they honored her by sharing their stories with her.

Grandma Sweety (that was her nickname) was a lover of Jesus. In her engagements with people no one would be able to leave the conversation without first being asked *do you love Jesus*? And if one did not answer in the affirmative, they would be a lover of Jesus by conversations end. This was not because Grandma FORCED Jesus on anyone but rather her love for Jesus was so contagious that anyone would fall in love with the Jesus *she* knew and loved. Her life in Christ was so profound because she lived that love out loud every day of her life. Her love for Jesus resonates with me to this day.

Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church Vision Statement

We are Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church, a multi-generational Christ community seeking to sing God's spirit into the world by inviting all, serving all, loving all.

604 Seven Mile Road, Hope, RI 02831 ***Sundays, 9:00 a.m.***
Office Hours: Monday through Thursday, 9:00-12:00
Phone: 401-821-8217 • E-mail: sovumcri@gmail.com • Web site: sovumc.org
Rev. Effie McAvoy

This year, when I think of a saint that has made a difference in my life, I think of Elizabeth McEachern (aka Grandma Sweety). I was 14 years old when I met her. She actually was my step-mother's grandmother. Nonetheless, Grandma Sweety never saw me as a "step child" but as an extension of her family tree…kind of like in the scriptures when Paul states that we as Christians have been *grafted into the inheritance of the Children of Isreal* (Romans 11:17-24). She loved me so much and I loved her too. I was blessed to have her in my life for 10 years. She died my last year at BU, but I know it was her prayers that helped me get through to the end.

In Protestantism, saints are folk who shined the light of Christ in their daily living…folk who made a difference in their world by being an example. I am sure that there are people in your lives who have made a difference. It could be a loved one, an educator, a dear friend. The saints of God live on in our hearts and empower us by their love to live in their example daily. Grandma Sweety's kindness is my example. I strive to live up to it daily. I fail at times yet even in failure I am blessed with the memory of her sharing with me her love for Jesus and the forgiveness offered by him. This testimony empowers me to forgive, be forgiven, and do better.

Thank you Grandma Sweety for not only being a saint of God, but also being a saint to me and a lifelong example of how to live, love, and serve!

In Christ's Service,

Pastor Effie

DECEMBER CIRCUIT RIDER INFORMATION DUE NOVEMBER 15TH



Fall Stewardship Campaign

During our stewardship time this year we have a dual focus. As part of our growth as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are intentionally paying attention to the many ways that we want to say thank you to God. Jesus lived his life with an attitude of gratitude toward God in all the different circumstances of his life and called his followers to give constant thanks and praise to God as well. If you have been in Sunday worship, you should have received a small journal that we invite you to use to daily identify some of the things for which you want to say thank you to God. If you haven't received one, we encourage you to find any pad or notebook and start to write or draw the things for which you are grateful.

As you say thank you to God for the many blessings in your life, we hope that you will also think about the church where you worship God, where you hear God's word and share in prayer with your siblings in Christ. We invite you to think about the ways that our church has made a difference in your life and be intentional about praying for our church. Many of us count on our church to be there whenever we need it. One of the realities of life is that while our church runs on prayer, it also needs the many people who volunteer to live out their discipleship through the ministry and mission of our local church.

In addition to the importance of prayer, and the actions of all of us, it also costs money to make all these things happen. Your generous gifts allow us to provide inspiring worship, education, feed those who are hungry, equip us to be agents of change in our world. Nobody likes to talk about money, but did you realize that Jesus talked about the way we use our possessions (or the way they sometimes control us) more than any other topic. So, on November 15th, we will be asking you to let us know how you plan to support the mission and ministry of your church with your time, your abilities, and your financial resources. Your church truly does need your generous financial gifts to continue to witness and be in ministry and mission.

Kent Millard in "The Gratitude Path" writes, "The truth about life is that when we open our hands and give generously to God, then we are in the open-handed position to receive blessings from God. Conversely, if we live with our fists tightly closed keeping our resources only for ourselves, we close ourselves off from receiving the blessings God wants to put in our hands. It is with open hands that we give to God, and it is with open hands that we receive from God. We need to open our hands and give to God, so we have open hands to receive from God. Life is a circle of receiving and giving."

Church Zoom Link

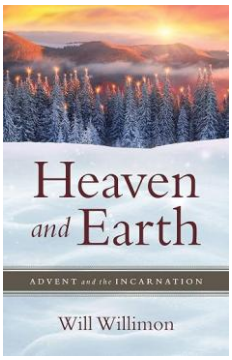
Use the link below for church meetings and study groups. If you need to use it for a meeting, check with the office to be sure there are no conflicts.
https://zoom.us/j/97102295116?pwd=amQrMU1IaFllZXJpZGtHMzJIVXVuQT09

Upcoming Events

Women in Spiritual Harmony (WISH)
WISH will be continuing our present study until November 11th. On the 18th we will be starting our Advent study. It is *Heaven and Earth: Advent and the Incarnation* by Will Willimon. The product description is as follows:

"Watch out. God is on the way."
It's not within our own power to make a fresh start. If we're to have a future different from the past, it must come as a gift, something not of our devising. What we need is a God who refuses to be trapped in eternity, a God who not only cares about us but is willing to show up among us and do something with us, here, now.

In *Heaven and Earth: Advent and the Incarnation*,



Will Willimon introduces you to the God who does just that, bringing heaven to earth and changing everything. In Advent we celebrate and anticipate the earth-shaking, life-transforming good news that God is coming to us. Watch out. Get ready. God is on the way."

We meet on Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. at the church. We will not be meeting on November 25th.

Wednesday Wisdom Seekers
We will continue with The Wired Word for two more weeks - November 4 & 11.

On November 18th, we will begin our Advent Study using the book *God's Surprises for the Christmas Season* by Susan Robb. Advent Study will be November 18, (No study on Nov 25), Dec 2, 9, & 16.

If you have not been able to join us for our weekly study but would like to join us for the Advent Study please do. We'd love to have you join us in person at SOV at 7:00 p.m. or by Zoom (see church Zoom link information on this page.

Shepherd of the Valley Women
The Shepherd of the Valley Women will meet on Thursday November 19th in the DEI room at 10:00 a.m. We discuss what is going on in our church and world. We raise people up in prayers. We plan annual fund raisers such as Soup Luncheon and Christmas Cookie Walk. You are welcome to bring a lunch and dessert is provided.

Annual Christmas Pageant
The annual family ministry Christmas pageant will be during service on December 20th and rehearsals, along with our weekly lessons will happen during Sunday school starting on November 1st. Please see Lisa Marciniak with any questions. Thank you!

Looking Toward December
This year's Carol Sing will be in the Fellowship Hall after the Worship Service on Sunday, December 20th. This is also the day of the Sunday School Pageant and most likely the Cookie Walk.

Thanksgiving Basket Drive

It's that time of year! We are collecting non-perishable food donations of gravy, canned vegetables, mashed potatoes, stuffing, and cranberry sauce as well as Gift Cards to hand out so that people can purchase turkey, rolls, and pies. Deadline is November 8th. (Note that you can purchase gift cards through the Stop and Shop Cash for Causes program that can be used in the Thanksgiving baskets.)





Worship Information

- Worship is in-person and live-streamed on our website. In person worship will be held in the Hope Room for the winter.
- We serve people with a variety of health conditions. Masks are not required but you are free to wear one. We ask others to please not judge those persons who are masked—we do not know everyone's story, nor is it any of our business why persons choose to mask or not mask. Please be kind to one another.
- Also, please be aware that sensitivities to perfumes are more acute in enclosed spaces.
- There are no printed bulletins—words and music are projected on the screens at the front of the church. You are welcome to access the bulletin on your phone; some copies are available as well.
- Fellowship Time will be held after worship. We may not always have food (see the "Sign e Up" section), but you are welcome to join us for conversation and connecting.

To access our live stream:
- Go to www.sovumc.org
- Scroll down the Home Page and click on the WATCH HERE button under LIVE STREAM to watch live.
- To see past Sunday services, click on the WATCH HERE button under VIDEO LIBRARY.

The nursery is available each Sunday for children who are not ready for Sunday school with supervision as we are able to provide. The service will be available on the SOV website on the TV in the nursery—just turn it on. Activity bins are available during the service as well.

Regular Events

- **Adult Choir**—The choir rehearses at 8:30 a.m. Rehearsals are held in the Hope Room.
- **Sunday School**—Meets on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m.
- **Communion**—Pastor Effie will be offering communion during worship each Sunday. If you would like to participate remotely, have some juice and some kind of bread or cracker which she will bless during worship.
- **Antiracism Group—**The Antiracism Group meets on the third Sunday of the month.
- **Women in Spiritual Harmony**—WISH meets on Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- **Wednesday Wisdom Seekers**—The Wisdom Seekers meets on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.
- **Shepherd of the Valley Women**—This group meets on the third Thursday of the month from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- **Men's Fellowship Breakfast**—This group will meet at 6:00 a.m. at the Phenix Square Restaurant on November 6th and 20th.

All Saints Sunday Photos

On All Saints Sunday, November 1st, we will be displaying photos of your loved ones who have passed on on the altar. Please email your photos to sovumcri@gmail.com or bring them into the church office.



Caring and Sharing

Scituate Art Festival Thanks
A big thank you to all who helped with the Art Festival. It was a great success, raising over $7,000 for our mission and ministry."

Annual Coat Drive
We are now beginning to collect new and gently used winter coats and apparel in ALL sizes, especially women's large and extra-large coats. More information will be coming!

Stop and Shop Cash for Causes Program Deadline for Payment – November 29
Sunday, November 29, will be the last day this month to pay for a new gift card or to reload a gift card that you already have. Payment can be made by check made out to "Shepherd of the Valley" with "Stop & Shop" in the memo line or online through Zeffy. Checks can be given to Carol Leith. Shepherd of the Valley earns 5% of the value of the gift cards and reloads. If you have any questions contact Carol at 518-275-1464 or leithfam@gmail.com

These gift cards make great Christmas gifts as they can be used for groceries and gas. They can also be used in our Thanksgiving baskets.

Magazines Needed
Please save your old magazines. AJ, one of our church children, relieves stress by tearing magazines and needs more given the increased tension of these times. Please bring your old magazines to the church. We will be sure to get them to AJ. And AJ and his family thank the Shepherd of the Valley community for their magazine donations.

Food Insecurity
If you know of someone who is experiencing food insecurity, we can help! The only requirement for access to our food pantry is need. Food pick-up is usually on Wednesdays, but other arrangements can be made if needed. Food allergies and issues are accommodated. Call the office to sign up.

Shepherd's Pantry (Food Pantry)
The Food Pantry serves our neighbors in need. Our supplies are almost depleted of our basic box items. We need more of what goes in our basic boxes. Box contents are listed below:

- 2 tuna fish cans
- 1 box cereal
- 1 jar peanut butter
- 1 jar of jelly
- 1 bottle of spaghetti sauce
- 2 boxes/containers of pasta
- 2 boxes macaroni & cheese
- 1 box/bag of rice, noodle mix or mashed potatoes,
- 2 cans of vegetables or soup
- 1 or more "treats" (canned fruit, boxed mixes, jello, cereal/granola bars, crackers, etc.)
- 1 or more rolls of toilet paper.

We also need $25 gift cards to purchase perishable items. (You can also purchase these through the Stop and Shop fundraiser and get "double duty" for SOV out of your purchase.) Finally, boxes (ideal size L14' x W 10' x H 10) are always needed . Thank you!

Pastor's Discretionary Fund
The Pastor's Discretionary Fund is very low. If you are interested in making a donation to this fund, used to help those in our church and community, including our Medical Assistance Fund, please indicate "PDF fund' in the memo line. Any donation would be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance!

Donation Bin
Our donation bin in the parking lot is open and ready for donations of clothing, shoes, sneakers, belts, purses, blankets, towels, sheets, pillowcases, curtains and stuffed toys ONLY. Please make sure your items are placed in a secured trash bag.

Medical Assistance Fund
The Medical Assistance Fund has been folded into the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. If you have medical financial needs, such as a lack of insurance or items insurance doesn't cover, please contact Pastor Effie or the church office as financial help may be available.

Ukrainian Relief
Here are some charities that are making an immediate impact on the crisis in Ukraine:

- UMCOR: UMCmission.org
- Advanced Project World Central Kitchen: WCK.org
- Chef Relief Team Global Giving: Ukrainian Crisis Relief Fund
- United Nations: Ukraine Humanitarian Fund

Looking for a Group to Join?
Try:

- Women in Spiritual Harmony (WISH)
- Anti-Racism Group
- Shepherd of the Valley Women
- Wednesday Wisdom Seekers study group
- Adult Choir
- Men's Breakfast

Save Your Pop-Tabs!
Keep saving your pop-tabs (soda or soup cans, etc.), putting them in the box in the kitchen, for the Ronald McDonald house in Providence. We recently dropped off a collection, and they were most grateful.

Website and Social Media
Head over to our website – sovumc.org – to get the latest news, current Order of Worship and Sunday Music, Circuit Rider, worship live-streaming, or worship library at Shepherd of the Valley. We're also on Facebook, Bluesky and YouTube. Follow us! To follow us, just click on any of the links above or head over to our webpage and click on the links there.

Effie's Schedule

- SOV: Monday and Wednesday
- Wesley: Tuesday and Thursday
- Fridays off

Office Notes

Church Email Address
Please be sure to use the correct email address: sovumcri@gmail.com.

Fundraisers and Mission Projects
If you are collecting items or sponsoring a fundraiser, PLEASE let the church office know so your efforts are coordinated with and don't overlap with other projects and fundraisers.

Calendar Updates
Be sure the office has the dates of all meetings and activities for the calendar.

Address Updates
If you're new to the church or have moved, please let the office know your correct address.

Zoom and Room Scheduling
Requests for use of the church's Zoom account for meetings or other purposes should be sent to the church office.

Announcements and Prayer Lists
Please have your announcements sent to the office no later than Tuesday for the following Sunday. Announcements should be brief (expanded versions should be sent to Hannah for the Circuit Rider.) Names for the Prayer List should also be sent to her with a notation for those who are long-term.

Sign Me Up

Nursery
Having our nursery open for the younger kids is so important for the adults who want to stay in service. If you would be able to help, please see Lisa Marciniak for more details.

Help Represent the Church
Church ushers are the first contact for members and visitors. They create a welcoming and inviting experience for everyone that comes through our doors. There is training provided, and you will be on a rotating schedule. Contact Jeremiah Rainville.

Liturgist Ministry
On a rotating schedule you will assist in leading worship. All readings and prayers will be sent in advance. If you are interested in learning more about this ministry, please contact Pastor Effie.

Fellowship Hosts
Fellowship after worship is a vital time at SOV for conversations and friendships. We're really into food too and hosting is simple. Make or buy what you want, it is up to you. Sign up in the church hallway. If you have any questions, contact Pastor Effie.

Church Council Minutes September 28, 2026

Council member Marti Bower called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Other members of the council present included Beverly Stenmark, John Lombardo, Carol Leith, Jeremiah Rainville, Mary Hunter, Megan Crete, Rob Bower, and Hannah Bell-Lombardo. Also present was Pastor Effie McAvoy.

Marti opened the meeting with an *Upper Room* reading on how God is working in our lives, and asked each of us to come up with an example when we give our reports.

- Family Ministry – Coordinator Lisa Marciniak was not able to be at the meeting but submitted her report in writing. It appears below:

  Sunday school is going well, and we were able to purchase curriculum digitally to help with lesson planning. Mary and I, along with Megan's help, are planning a fall fest that is open to the whole congregation as well as Wesley. Halloween costumes are encouraged for kids and welcomed for adults as well. There will be snacks, games and fellowship. The event will take place on 10/24 from 2-4 in the upper grassy area/parking lot. We will be inside

if need be. The information will be in the circuit rider and is already in the weekly announcements. I will be reaching out to Wesley this week and will have flyers for around the church. Thank you!

- Staff Parish Relations Committee: Carol Leith reported that we replaced the administrative assistant in August when Cindy retired. The new assistant is Karen Bell. Alex Etheridge has taken on the title of webmaster with will be adding documents to the website and updating it along with her Sunday morning responsibilities. We should let her know if any updating is required. The email address is sovannouncements@gmail.com. Effie will provide the email address to use and will review what is being sent Alex. Hannah cautioned that someone should be reviewing website content to be sure it is correct and reflects what we want to communicate. Carol noted that she is working on the conference forms for the pastor's compensation, the parsonage, and the church profile.
- Ushers – Jeremiah reported that ushering is going fine with Bob Horton and Pat Rodin stepping in when he can't. We need to work on additional ushers. He also noted that he's provided his Servant's Report to Effie and has an appointment Thursday on his CLM status.
- Art Festival – Rob reported that Venmo has been suggested to take payments at the Art Festival—it was suggested to talk to Martha Ahern, our treasurer. He is pretty well set on volunteers with the exception of a couple of afternoon slots.
- Finance – John noted that we are about $3000 worse than budget, mostly due to weekly giving. There are some other smaller items, but there does not appear to be any trends with them. Our Mission Shares obligation through the first six months is about $19,000. We have sent in about $8000. Marti noted that the insurance committee received over $300,000 back from the insurance company, but that it has not yet been voted on what will happen with these funds and if any will come back to SOV.
- Stewardship – Beverly reported that she, Dan Gennant of Wesley, and Effie have put together a stewardship campaign using a gratitude theme. It will start on 10/18 after the Art Festival weekend and continue until 11/15, the Sunday before Wesley's Christmas bazaar. Effie will coordinate her sermons around this theme. She has to prepare a narrative budget and has asked for the information from John.
- Lay leaders – Megan and Mary have submitted their conference report, and working with Val on a possible game night and other outreach.
- Trustees – Effie reported that we have received an estimate for the LED lights in the cross—about half are out. The sanctuary lights need to be changed out but need to wait for more to go out as a lift is needed. The tag sale scheduled for last summer was postponed to next summer due to the office and pastoral transitions. The dead trees at the exit need to be removed. Bob Horton and Mark Rodin have put up a new Pride flag out front. Ring cameras have been purchased and placed around the church. We also have decoy cameras. One more is needed for out front. The Hope Room mortgage will be paid off a year from December. Thank you notes have been sent for memorial gifts in honor of Regina Sprague.
- Office – Effie has been working on getting our new administrative assistant settled and structuring her week to accomplish what needs to be done. Effie is also working on the church conference and has requested reports from those responsible.
- Worship – We will combine worship via Zoom for both churches in case of inclement weather. It will be a different Zoom link than the usual church one.

Effie closed the meeting with a prayer at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Bell-Lombardo



Wesley UMC -Christmas on the Hill Bazaar November 21st from 9am-3pm

How to get involved:

- **Come!** See what we have to offer and start your holiday shopping early.

- **Volunteer**
  1. Greet and sell at each of the tables anytime between 8:30 and 3:00 (take a shift—you don't need to be there the entire time)
  2. Clean up the day of at 3:00pm
  3. Contact Linda Andrews at bruceandlinda68@gmail.com if you are interested in donating your time.

- **Donate**
  1. **Items for the Silent Auction:** Gift baskets, art, gift certificates, event tickets etc.)
  2. **Craft items to sell:** Knitted or crocheted items
  3. **Gently used books for our Book Nook:** Both for adults and children

  (Please provide suggested pricing for any of the above when dropping off. Can be brought in any time the office is open—we have storage)
  4. **Baked goods and prepared food:** Cookies, bars, cakes, cookie/soup mix jars, candies—please bring in items on Friday November 20th or morning of the 21st
  5. **Items for our Attic Treasure:** Household goods, toys, etc. you are no longer in need of. Please no clothing or electronic items. All others can be dropped off in the Music Room beginning November 1st

We are truly grateful for all donations of items or time.
If there are any questions do not hesitate to reach out to
Chris Genannt 508-479-5791 or chrislynn2@comcast.net