

# NOWATA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER



## Separating Truth from Fiction

*Written by Pastor Jeffrey Rickman*

Misinformation, or the accusation of it, has badly warped this generation's understanding of truth. It began with President Trump's accusations of "fake news" and then morphed into "misinformation" in the Covid era. Of course, propaganda and lies have always been mixed into the truth of every era. Even so, our time feels particularly rife with it.

Last month, I was corrected by a conference official for my phrasing in my newsletter article. She thought I was speaking with more certainty than the moment afforded. I augmented some words and addressed it from the pulpit.

I CANNOT AGREE WITH THOSE WHO SAY THEY HAVE 'NEW TRUTH' TO TEACH.

THE TWO WORDS SEEM TO ME TO CONTRADICT EACH OTHER; THAT WHICH IS NEW IS NOT TRUE.

IT IS THE OLD THAT IS TRUE, FOR TRUTH IS AS OLD AS GOD.

CHARLES SPURGEON

She and I have spoken since then, and I think we are fine. But misinformation, or the accusation of it, is ruining many things.

In fact, a few weeks ago, in North Georgia Annual Conference, their conference leadership said flatly that no more churches can disaffiliate because so many were/are participating in misinformation.

I was able to interview Bishop John Wesley Yohanna of the Nigeria Episcopal Area last week on my PlainSpoken podcast. According to some, he is the biggest proponent of traditional Wesleyanism in the denomination. To others, he is only a money- and power-hungry crook who took the bishop's office by force. I have seen the 'information' on him from friends and enemies alike. It is hard to know the truth, especially from a few thousand miles away. It was a nice visit, though.

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*Christians know there is a difference between the light and the dark, good and bad, right and wrong.*

I believe the evil one is behind all this. He wants us to be unable to separate truth from fiction. He wants us all to float through life shrugging, not standing for anything out of fear that we could be wrong. I often note that people, unwilling to learn or take a stand, blandly offer that “both sides” have done their part. “It takes two to tango,” is the old way of saying that.

Except that's not really how life always is. Christians know there is a difference between the light and the dark, good and bad, right and wrong. Sometimes both parties have done wrong, but sometimes there really is a victim and an aggressor. Christ requires for us to use our discerning faculties to navigate life. When we elect to shrug and blindly stand for our partisan loyalties, or stick our heads in the sand, we refuse to use the good gifts our Lord has given us, instead serving the interests of the evil one.

It is overwhelming to separate truth from fiction, but that is our task. Thanks be to God that he has equipped us for this task with his Holy Word, the Church, and the Holy Spirit! Let's continue using these resources in earnest together, navigating the lies of this world, driving towards the TRUTH together...

## Corner of Appreciation

We want to express our appreciation for those who serve our church in various ways on Sundays and throughout the week.

Bobby Wilson coordinated another lovely time of singing at Nowata Nursing Home on January 22.

Karen Wilson, Terry McKee, and Roberta Maly prepared a wonderful potluck meal on January 29. David and Whitney Smalley washed most of the dishes! Thank you!

# Coming Up in February

- February 4  
Delaware Methodist Breakfast  
7-10am
- February 5  
Bud Callison's birthday
- February 12  
Town Hall meeting on  
disaffiliation from UMC, after  
worship
- February 14  
Administrative Board  
meeting at 6:30pm
- February 15  
Terry McKee's birthday
- February 19  
Vote on disaffiliation from  
UMC, after worship  
Mark H.'s birthday
- February 20  
Mary K.'s birthday
- February 26  
Potluck after worship

## Happening Every Week

Worship: Sundays at 11am

Women's Prayer Group:  
Wednesdays at 10:30am

Office Hours: Monday-Friday  
from 9am-12:30pm

### Contact Us

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# Let's keep feasting on God's word. Join us in the 'Bible Reading Challenge'

Join us in this essential spiritual discipline. Read what you can, and don't be discouraged if you get behind. There are "catch up days" built in to the plan. It is a blessing to feast on God's word each day!

### FEBRUARY 2023

- WED **1** *Catch-Up Day (optional: Isaiah 40, John 10, Psalm 23)†*
- THU **2** Amos 1-5, Psalm 25
- FRI **3** Amos 6-9, Obadiah, Proverbs 10
- SAT **4** Zephaniah 1-3, Psalms 9 & 11, Proverbs 11
- MON **6** Esther 1-7
- TUE **7** Esther 8-10, Psalms 12, 14 & 15
- WED **8** Titus 1-3, Psalm 16, Proverbs 12
- THU **9** *Catch-Up Day (optional: 1 Timothy 1-6)†*
- FRI **10** 1 Chronicles 1-5, Psalm 26
- SAT **11** 1 Chronicles 6-10, Psalm 27
- MON **13** 1 Chronicles 11-15. Psalm 28
- TUE **14** 1 Chronicles 16-20, Psalm 29
- WED **15** 1 Chronicles 21-25, Psalm 127
- THU **16** 1 Chronicles 26-29, Psalm 32, Proverbs 13
- FRI **17** *Catch-Up Day (optional: Psalms 96 & 105-106) †*
- SAT **18** 2 Chronicles 1-5, Psalm 72
- MON **20** 2 Chronicles 6-10, Psalm 30
- TUE **21** 2 Chronicles 11-16
- WED **22** 2 Chronicles 17-21, Proverbs 14
- THU **23** 2 Chronicles 22-26, Psalm 121
- FRI **24** 2 Chronicles 27-30, Psalms 122-123
- SAT **25** 2 Chronicles 31-36
- MON **27** *Catch-Up Day (optional: Psalms 25-28)†*
- TUE **28** Ezra 1-6

# MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Looking for ways to serve your church and community? Our church hosts several groups that can help you engage your faith and minister to others, and we are also tied to several local groups that minister to the community.

- ✔ **Women's Prayer Group, contact Sara Beth Rickman**
- ✔ **Singing at the local nursing homes, contact Bobby Wilson**
- ✔ **Care for children during worship or discipleship groups, contact Sara Beth Rickman**
- ✔ **Care for the church property, contact Mike Staehle**
- ✔ **Volunteering at the Boys and Girls Club, contact Brynn Barron**
- ✔ **Volunteer at a local food bank, contact Vicki Mendell**



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## ***Prayer is an essential spiritual discipline.***

*When should you pray?* Pray without ceasing. (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

*How should you pray?* Pray with love perseverance, and gratefulness. (New City Catechism, Question 39)

*What should you pray?* The whole Word of God directs and inspires us in what we should pray including the prayer Jesus himself taught us. (New City Catechism, Question 40)