

The logo for Salt Life, featuring the words "Salt Life" in a stylized, blue, cursive font. The background of the entire page is a photograph of a large, rusted metal structure, possibly a door or window frame, lying on a muddy ground. A large, golden cross is placed in the foreground, partially overlapping the metal structure. The cross has a circular emblem in the center with the letters "SL" inside. In the bottom right corner, there is a small piece of white paper with some text, including "Marie", "311 St. Joe Street", and "Fl. 3245".

Salt Life

NOVEMBER 2018
VOLUME 17 ISSUE 11

P.3 REBUILD

As a church and community we will rebuild.
Find out more about REBUILD on page 3.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | PORT ST. JOE

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR PASTOR



Dear Friends,

As I walked through the ruins of our town and church this week, I kept coming back to the story of the calling of St. Francis. He was wandering through the town of Assisi when he came upon a dilapidated church. While praying in the sanctuary, he heard the words of Jesus speak from the cross in the front of the church, "Rebuild my church, for my house is in ruins." Francis took these words to heart and immediately started rebuilding that church and within a matter of time it became a center for the community.

In our time, we are hearing the same call. The church that we loved is in ruin. The sanctuary where we have

baptized our children, married our spouses, and said our last farewells to our loved ones is in disrepair, and God is calling upon our generation to REBUILD. We have a lot of work before us, but I am confident that we will REBUILD, and our church and its buildings will once again be the center of our community.

When Francis began this endeavor centuries ago, he discovered that the community that began in his restored church had a ripple effect around the church and around the world. In fact, he came to believe that the original call to REBUILD was less about that little building and more about the church universal. I believe that what God is about to do in Port St. Joe will make a huge difference in Port St. Joe and the Forgotten Coast, and its ripples will transform the United Methodist Church and the world. God wants to REBUILD the church. God wants to REBUILD our lives. As we REBUILD our homes and business, we are rebuilding our lives. The First Epistle of Peter 2:5 says that we ourselves are "living stones being built up as a spiritual house." We will REBUILD.

Peace of Christ,

Dr. Geoffrey Lentz
Senior Pastor

IN LOVE AND REMEMBRANCE

Condolences are extended to the friends and family of **Bill McConnell**. Bill died on October 10, 2018.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Sherri & Mark Bankord



Suzanne & Rock Doddridge



Linda & Dennis Fitch



The history of the Methodist church in Port St. Joe, Florida is intertwined with the history of the town itself. Old St. Joseph was founded in 1829 and soon thereafter a Methodist church was established. But then hard times fell on the church and community. In 1841 the Yellow Plague decimated the town of Old St. Joseph. This horrendous outbreak of yellow fever claimed seventy-five percent of the towns population including the lives of two of the pastors of the Methodist church. Soon thereafter a devastating hurricane came ashore destroying virtually every building in town with a six-foot wall of water. Many thought Old St. Joseph would never rebound.

But the town did not lose heart. One writer upon viewing the ruins of the old city stated, “St. Joseph in ruins is more dear to my heart than any spot of more worldly grandeur so peaceful, so healthful, it seemed as if its very repose led me nearer to my God, so free from conventionalities and restraints, so gloriously stamped by the finger of God.”

In 1913, the new city of Port St. Joe was established, and just like the city, the Methodist church rose again. Beginning first as a Sunday school class, the congregation then reestablished itself as a church. Over the next hundred years, the church continued to grow and became known as First United Methodist Church of Port St. Joe. The current sanctuary situated between the palms and the pines on St. Joseph Bay was completed in 1950.

Then on October 10, 2018 Hurricane Michael, the strongest hurricane on record to hit the panhandle of Florida, slammed into Port St. Joe and the surrounding communities, leaving a path of destruction and forever impacting the footprint of Port St. Joe and First United Methodist Church of Port St. Joe. The massive storm caused widespread damage to many homes and businesses, severely damaged all of the church's buildings, and completely destroyed the neighboring parsonage.

Port St. Joe and the Methodist church have experienced this pain and struggle before. But Psalm 46 reminds us that God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. At the city-wide worship service on the Sunday following Hurricane Michael, Dr. Geoffrey Lentz, the Senior Pastor of First United Methodist Church, in an impassioned devotion, encouraged everyone in Port St. Joe to take one small step forward for yourself and your family and another small step forward for your neighbors and your community every day. Together, as a church and as a community, Port St. Joe will rebuild.

Want to know how you can help the church rebuild? Read more about it on page 7 in the section titled REBUILD.



STAY CONNECTED WHEN YOU ARE AWAY

One thing Hurricane Michael has taught us is how important it is to stay connected even when we are away. We are a family, a community of faith, and being there for each other is an important part of being a community. However, sometimes events in life cause us to be a way from our church family. Thankfully technology today provides us tools to remain connected even when we are away.

The Sunday before the hurricane hit was the first time we streamed our Sunday worship service on Facebook LIVE. **We will continue streaming our service each Sunday at 10:00am EST, even while we are meeting in the Great Hall. If you can't attend in person, we encourage you to watch and participate online.**

We are also thankful that our Associate Pastor Rev. Britney Toner has been leading us and pioneering what virtual church might look like for us on Facebook. For the past two weeks Britney has been posting encouraging messages and words of wisdom on our Facebook page, in addition to leading us in a virtual worship service on Sunday and a Bible study on Wednesday. This kept us together as a community of faith even while many of us were evacuated and scattered across the southeast.

While virtual church isn't a complete substitute for the community we experience when we physically gather together, it is a valuable resource available to us all to keep us connected when we have to be away!

MINISTRY TO THE COMMUNITY

PROVIDING HOPE, ONE BIKE AT A TIME

Two of our newest members, Sherri and Mark Bankord, have been providing hope to the community of Port St. Joe, one bike at a time. Soon after Hurricane Michael came ashore in Mexico Beach, Mark connected with the National Director of Disaster Relief for World Vision. World Vision immediately asked how they could help. "Tell us what you need and we will send a truck to PSJ."

Thankfully food, water, and relief supplies were already flowing in to the area, so Sherri and Mark decided to request something different. After living in Port St. Joe for the last year, they noticed how many people use biking as their primary means of transportation. "We felt like bikes would meet a need for people. So we asked World Vision for bikes" they said.

On Friday, October 26th, only 16 days after the storm, a semi-truck with 100 bright yellow bikes arrived at the church. Thirty of the bikes were immediately taken to New Bethel AME, our sister church in PSJ, for them to distribute. Then on Sunday, October 28th, our first Sunday gathering together in the Great Hall following the storm, the congregation was asked to help suggest people they knew who needed a bike. Distributions of the bikes began that Sunday afternoon and all of the bikes were in the hands of a thankful new owner by Wednesday, October 31st. Each bike has a sticker which reads "For our friends in Port St. Joe, FL compliments of PSJUMC.org."

Here are a few of the stories of those who received bikes:

Jasmine works the night shift in housekeeping at the hospital. She rides a bike to work at night three miles without a light or reflector and prays for a full moon for her commute. She is a single mom who lost everything in the resulting floods of Hurricane Harvey last year in Houston. She's hearing impaired, so when she found work in PSJ, she moved here. This week, while distributing bikes, we passed Jasmine as she was pushing her old bike home from work because the chain had fallen off. We stopped, picked her up, and took her to church for a new bike, complete with head light and bike lock! She was so thankful and excited!

Twelve employees of Pepper's Mexican Restaurant, all who walk to work, received new bikes. These employees had used the restaurant for shelter during the hurricane. On their own initiative, they held the water out of the building with sand bags and by mopping out the water as it entered during the storm. As a result, Pepper's was the only restaurant open the day after the hurricane, serving free tacos to first responders and hungry residents. Three weeks later Pepper's is still one of the few restaurants already open and serving food.

Bonnie is an 85 yr old WWII Vet. His wife needs dialysis, so he is often left with only a bike to get around, while his wife uses their one car. This reliable new bike is a blessing to him.

This ministry is just one example of how our church is making a positive difference in our community following the aftermath of Hurricane Michael. Let us continue to be a church that puts our faith into action by serving our neighbors and sharing the love of God to everyone we meet through word and deed.





rebuilding together

WHAT'S HAPPENING FIRST UMC PORT ST. JOE

**SERVICE
TIME** | **SUNDAY MORNING**
10:00 AM (EASTERN)
IN THE GREAT HALL

SUNDAY WORSHIP

10:00AM WORSHIP SERVICE

The Great Hall

For the foreseeable future we will be having one worship service on Sunday mornings at 10:00am (Eastern) in The Great Hall. The best way to enter is through the rotunda doors. The service will also be streamed on Facebook LIVE for those who can't join us in person.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT ACTIVITIES

DINNER AND ACTIVITIES RESUME NOV 7

Wednesday Night Dinner and Activities resume on November 7th. Due to the damage sustained in all of our buildings, most of our activities will take place in The Great Hall or on the Rotunda.

Wednesday Night Schedule

5:15PM Fellowship Dinner
5:30PM Little Lambs
6:00PM Kids Life
6:00PM Youth
6:00PM Pastor's Bible Study
7:00PM Choir Practice

SUPPLIES AVAILABLE

Hurricane relief supplies, including UMCOR flood buckets and tarps, are available at the church for anyone who needs them. If you, your neighbors, or anyone you know is in need of these supplies please stop by or call the church during office hours.

METHODIST LEARNING CENTER

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed for the MLC After School program at PSJ Elementary School. Contact Courtney Knox for more info at 850-832-9500.

STATUS REPORT

Please let the church know your status following Hurricane Michael. We want to be attentive to the needs of the congregation and the community, and that begins by letting the church know how you are. A list for you to include a personal status report is available on Sunday during worship.

VOLUNTEER SIGN UP

Over the coming weeks and months, many volunteers will be needed to serve at the church and in the community. We are keeping a list of everyone who is available and willing to volunteer. If you haven't already, please sign-up on Sunday during worship, or by emailing info@psjumc.org. If you sign-up via email, please place "Volunteer Sign-up" in the subject line and include your name, cell phone number, and email address.

THANK YOU

Special thanks to the countless volunteers from all over the United States who are giving generously of their time and resources to help us begin the recovery and rebuilding process as both a church and community.

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

All Saints Day is observed on November 1 of each year. On Sunday, November 11, we will be celebrating All Saints Sunday as we remember our church's saints. The purpose of All Saints Sunday is to honor and remember those who have died since the last All Saints Day. At our 10AM service, we will be calling the names of members and friends of our church who have died in the last year. If you would like a name added to the list, please contact the church office.

REBUILD | HOW YOU CAN HELP

Rebuilding our church and community is going to be a long process which requires patience and sacrifice from all of us. However, there is no doubt that we will rebuild and continue to grow and minister to our community and the world. Many have asked how they can help the church rebuild. Members are asked to continue tithing, which goes to our operating budget and allows us to continue our ministry.

SHARE OUR STORY

We are asking our friends, families, and generous hearts all over the United States to help us REBUILD in the aftermath of the storm. A REBUILD account has been setup on Facebook which is an easy way to share our story and invite others to donate to REBUILD the church. 100% of what is donated on Facebook goes to rebuilding. We encourage you to share REBUILD on Facebook and invite everyone you know to be a part of our rebuilding story.

#GIVINGTUESDAY

November 27th, the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, is known as Giving Tuesday. This is a day set aside to encourage charitable giving to non-profit organizations such as our church. As part of #GivingTuesday, Facebook will be matching donations which are given through our Facebook donations page beginning at 8:00am EST on November 27th.

Donations up to \$250k per nonprofit and \$20k per donor are eligible to be matched. Facebook will match donations starting at 8am EST and continue matching donations to nonprofits until the \$7M match runs out (which could happen in just a few hours).

If you have the resources or know someone who could give at 8:00am on #givingtuesday, it would be a great way to maximize our REBUILD. We will share more about this great opportunity as November 27th approaches.



FIRST UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH OF PORT ST. JOE

P.O. Box 266, Port St. Joe, Florida 32457
850.227.1724 | PSJUMC.org | Info@PSJUMC.org



Salt Life is a monthly newsletter published by First United Methodist Church of Port St. Joe. If you have information to be included in an upcoming edition, or you have any questions or comments regarding the Salt Life Newsletter, please email info@psjumc.org or call the church office. Please Note: all information to be included is subject to approval and must be submitted by the appropriate deadlines.

inside this edition...



and more.