

Dranesville UMC Newsletter

February 2026

Pastor Keith & Politics

In this region near DC, politics has a way of filling the air. It shows up on our phones, our conversations, and sometimes even at our dinner tables. Some of us feel fired up. Some of us feel worn out. Some of us feel confused. And some of us would rather avoid it altogether. I understand all of that.

I also want you to know that I'm grateful to all our members for keeping this topic at bay. You always have prioritized the love of neighbors over political debates. Thank you! I write this letter to clarify what you can expect from me.

We are not going to chase headlines. We are going to chase faithfulness. That doesn't mean our faith has nothing to say about the world we live in. It does. Scripture speaks to truth and honesty, to justice and mercy, to the dignity of every person, to caring for the poor, to welcoming the stranger, to providing housing, and to living with integrity. Those are not "political topics" first. They are Christian commitments.

At the same time, we are not going to turn the church into a partisan megaphone. We won't be a place where one party gets baptized as "God's team" and the other party gets treated like the enemy. Jesus is not running for office, and the gospel is not a campaign slogan. The church belongs to Christ, not to a party, not to a news channel, and not to the loudest voices online.

Another reason I want to be careful is simple: many issues are complex. I don't know all the details about every policy, every bill, or every headline. Knee-jerk reactions usually don't help. They tend to make us more fearful, more angry, and more certain than we should be. And that's not the spirit God is growing in us. The fruit of the Spirit looks like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If our public conversations are pulling us away from those things, then something is off.

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**Come worship with us
on Sundays at 10:30 a.m.**

**In the Sanctuary
or virtually via Zoom**

**Coffee hour following
worship via Zoom or live**

**Adult Sunday School
at 9:00 a.m.**

*If you would like to join,
please contact us at
office@dranesvilleumc.org.*

Pastor Keith & Politics (continued)

So we will continue to do the following: we will lead with faith, not with outrage. We will speak from Scripture more than we speak from the news. We will make room for humility. We will admit when we don't know enough. We will be slow to speak and quick to listen. And we will remember that sincere Christians can disagree on the best solutions while still sharing the same Lord and the same calling.

Most of all, we will refuse to treat our neighbors like enemies. We will refuse contempt. We will refuse name-calling and caricatures. We will not reduce people to labels. Every person you meet is made in the image of God. That includes the person who votes like you and the person who doesn't. Our witness depends on this. The way we talk matters. The way we listen matters. The way we disagree matters.

So I want to offer a simple covenant for us as a church this year:

We will tell the truth with utmost love.

We will listen before we label.

We will refuse easy outrage.

We will pray for both leaders we like and leaders who we don't.

We will treat people made in God's image like they are made in God's image.

If you are tired, I hope the church can be a place where you can breathe again. If you are passionate, I hope the church can help you stay rooted in love. And if you feel stuck between voices that want you to pick a side, I hope you'll remember this: our first loyalty is not to a party. Our first loyalty is to Jesus. And when we keep him at the center, we can be a people of conviction and compassion in a world that desperately needs both.

Thank you,

Pastor Keith



Bible Study

Tuesday and Thursday Bible Study

[Dranesvilleumc.org/connect](https://dranesvilleumc.org/connect)

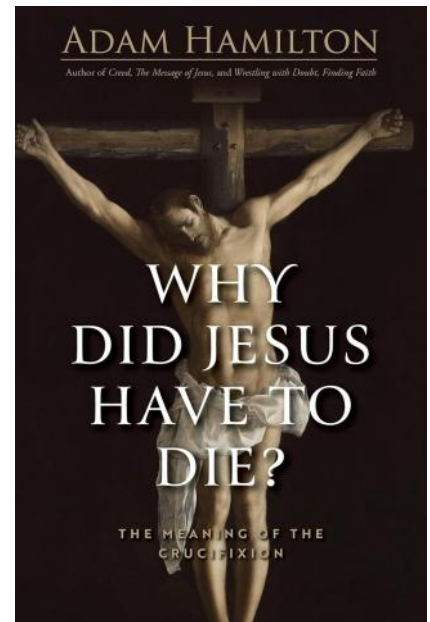
Tuesday Evening: 7pm OR Thursday Morning: 10am

Why Did Jesus Have To Die?

When words fall short, the cross still speaks.

Despite the crucifixion's central place in Christian faith, the New Testament offers few clear answers about how Jesus' death saves, or why, exactly, he had to die. The New Testament writers use a host of metaphors—ransom, sacrifice, reconciliation, victory—but never explain exactly how it works or why it had to happen this way.

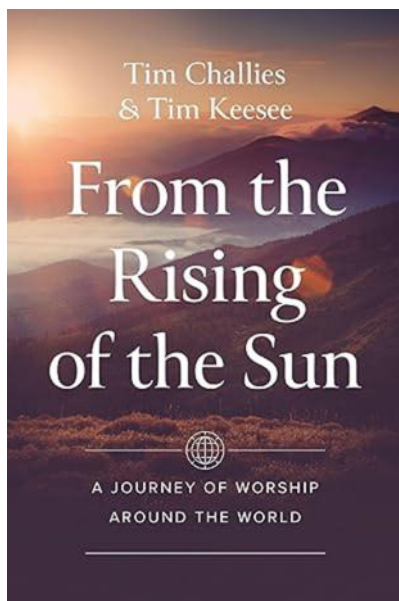
What if that's because we've been asking the wrong question? What if the cross isn't a transaction to be explained, but a living Word from God meant to transform who we are and how we live?



Adult Sunday School

From the Rising of the Sun

Tim Challies & Tim Keese



From the Rising of the Sun takes you on an unforgettable journey, showcasing how believers from all corners of the earth praise God in ways that are consistent with Scripture but faithful to the local language, customs, and culture.

Whether you're passionate about global missions, fascinated by cultural diversity, or simply looking to deepen your understanding of worship, *From the Rising of the Sun* will inspire and uplift you.

Join us in the library or on Zoom at 9:00 for this twelve-week series starting Sunday January 05, 2026.

Every Week Join Us In Study and Prayer: [Dranesvilleumc.org/connect](https://dranesvilleumc.org/connect)

Prayer group is meeting virtually via Zoom, Tuesdays at 8:00 am [Zoom link here.](#)

Bible Study: Join anytime.

Tuesday Evening Bible Study: 7 pm Zoom info: [Zoom link for Tues Evening Bible Study](#)

Thursday Morning Bible Study: 10 am Zoom Info: [Zoom link for Thurs Morning Bible Study](#)

Fellowship

Lunch with the Evergreen Group:



February 8th at 12:00 pm in Sterling
at The Bungalow Lakehouse Restaurant.

Please see Pete Hause for details and
to RSVP or call 703-430-7166.

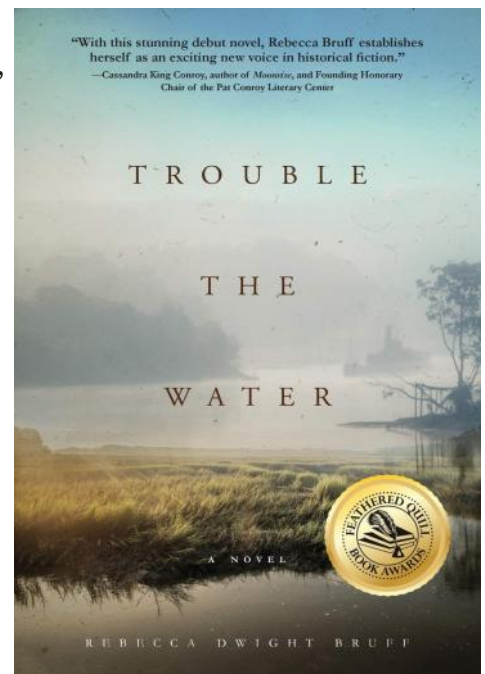
DUMC Book Club—March 11th

Rebecca Bruff, the author of *Trouble the Water*, has agreed to join our Book Group discussion via Zoom on March 11th. We plan to meet on Zoom and at the Church Library at 7:00pm. Please let Beth Hitchings know if you plan to participate on Zoom. layleader@dranesvilleumc.org.

The Book Group welcomed several new attendees (one and all are welcome!) to discuss The Art Thief by Michael Finkel. A lively discussion alongside Janet's homemade cookies made for a great evening.

The Group will meet on March 11th at 7:00pm to discuss **Trouble the Water by Rebecca Dwight Bruff** (available in the library, used or new, audiobook, etc.) Inspired by a true story, Trouble the Water is about risking everything for freedom. Born a slave, Robert Smalls commandeered a Confederate arms ship from Charleston harbor, and with the woman he loved and a small crew of other slaves, delivered it to the Union Navy. After the war ended Smalls was able to purchase the house in which he and his mother had been enslaved, and he became one of America's first black legislators. His courage, thirst for knowledge, and compassion ultimately changed the lives of untold others, including making South Carolina the first state to legislate public education for all.

From his illiterate childhood to his thrilling escape to freedom, from his work to make South Carolina the first state to guarantee public education, to his final days on the porch of his family home — *Trouble the Water* will thrill history lovers, biographical fiction fans, and book group members who appreciate exciting fiction based on the lives of real people.



Community Pot Luck Dinners

February 4th
"Tailgate" (rescheduled from January 28th)

and February 25th
"Comfort Food"

Thanks, Donna



Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

I just wanted to take a moment to say thank you for your church's faithfulness in paying 100% or more of your apportionment askings for 2025! Your faithfulness makes our connection strong as we serve in mission in our communities and throughout the world! There is a direct correlation between pastors who take paying their apportionments seriously and the churches who are able to pay them. Thank you for your excellent leadership. It does not go unnoticed!

And please thank your lay leadership teams (One Board Model, Church Council, Finance Committees) on my behalf.

I see you, and I wanted to thank you for your great leadership.

Your servant in Christ,

Kirk Nave

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[Northern Virginia District, United Methodist Church](#)



"Live in such a way that those who know you but don't know God, will come to know God because they know you." - Author Unknown

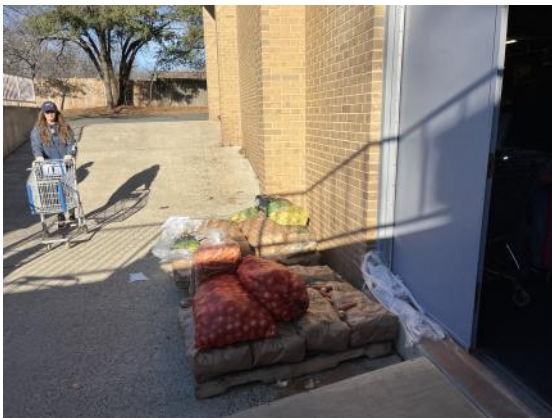
Mobile Food Pantry: Next: February 10th

Register online for the latest updates. Join us on the **2nd Tuesday of each month** (light rain or shine) from 9:30 am – 12 pm (or until the food runs out) in the rear parking lot at Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church. Join Team Dranesville and wear your Dranesville UMC T-shirts while packing food for those in need.

Here's some happenings from the November Mobile Food Pantry!



Not pictured: Leigh Jones, Bill & Carol Owens

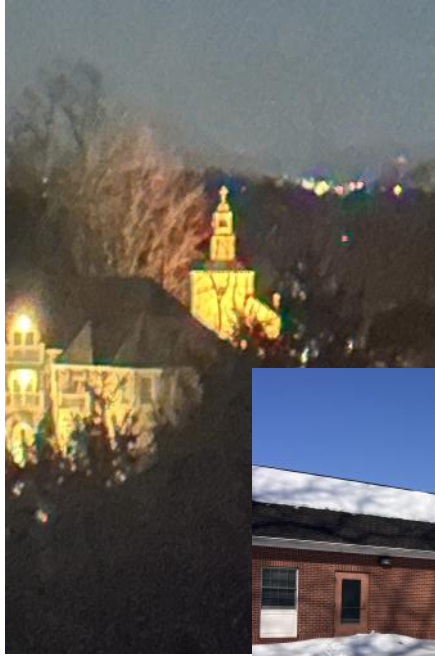


EVEN 4 OTHERS COLLECTION ON FEBRUARY 22nd!!

Once again we will have a collection for LINK Against Hunger. Please leave donations in the big wooden box in front of the office before church on Sunday, April 23rd. They will be counted and transported to the LINK location after church.

Some of the top needs are Jelly, Dried beans, Canned fruit, Canned corn, peas, carrots, potatoes, Boxed potatoes, Toilet paper, Paper towels, Cleaning products, and personal Toiletry items .

SNOW DAY





Dranesville

United Methodist Church

*“Making disciples of Jesus Christ by
feeding body, mind and soul.”*

In the event of inclement weather, we may move to a virtual-only zoom service. We will publish any notification of cancellation of our in-person worship by email on Saturday. We encourage all church members, and guests to observe all safety precautions by staying off the roads during extremely dangerous weather conditions.

February

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| 1 | Snow Day |
| 4 | Rescheduled Potluck |
| 8 | Holy Communion |
| | Evergreen Lunch at 12:00 pm |
| 10 | Mobile Food Pantry |
| 18 | Ash Wednesday Service 7pm |
| 22 | Even 4 Others Collection |
| 25 | Wednesday Community Comfort Food Potluck |

GIVE Online!



March

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Holy Communion |
| 8 | Evergreen Lunch at 12:00 pm |
| 10 | Mobile Food Pantry |
| 22 | Even 4 Others Collection |
| 25 | Wednesday Community Comfort Food Potluck |
| 29 | Palm Sunday Service |

Every Week Join Us In Study and Prayer:

[Dranesvilleumc.org/connect](https://dranesvilleumc.org/connect)

- ♦ Sundays at 9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School in person and via Zoom
- ♦ Tuesdays at 8:00 a.m. Prayer group is meeting virtually via Zoom
- ♦ Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. and Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. Bible Study is held via Zoom

To get connected to any of the virtual meetings, please contact the church office by e-mailing office@dranesvilleumc.org or leave a message at 703-430-3137 anytime.

Office hours: Tuesday—Friday 8:30 am—12:30 pm