



The Plumbline

Newsletter of the Wilmore Free Methodist Church

February/March 2026



AI PRINCIPLES AND PROBLEMS

By Pastor Daryl

As you read this, we'll be just beginning a short Sunday morning message series on artificial intelligence (AI). Of course, a whole year of Sunday morning messages wouldn't even begin to cover AI's complexities and its effects on our society. But having more nerve than sense at times, of course I'll give it a go.

In the interest of full disclosure, I freely admit that I know little about the ins and outs of AI. The sum of my understanding is that it's something of an increasingly sophisticated combination of comprehensive (even worldwide) data gathering and what used to be called "machine learning." The more the computer knows and the faster it can process what it knows, the more capable it becomes to produce answers, decisions, and conclusions, which has all been made possible by the invention of ever smaller and faster processors.

As I observe it, if you ask ten people their opinion of AI, you'll likely get ten different answers, ranging from "AI is the answer to all that ails humanity," to, "AI is a tool of the devil that ought to be permanently unplugged." Some trust it implicitly;

others not at all. Some have explored its depths and are using it quite a lot every day; others have never (intentionally) engaged it. (I say "intentionally" because, the fact is, if you've used Google or some other online search engine, you've used it.)

Personally, I'm old enough to remember all these same sorts of responses to the initial public use of the Internet—yes, like when it first came out. Some reading this are old enough to remember these same sorts of wonderings about television.

But is AI different? Different from radio, TV, computers, internet, cell phones, etc.? In some ways yes and in other ways, no.

Technology marches on—that's a fact of life. Back when people tried to cure just about every human disease with bloodletting, they couldn't imagine the medicines, surgeries, and therapies for healing we know today.

Radios used to be as big as a fireplace; computers as big as a small Walmart. We first sent people to the moon with the Apollo Guidance Computer (AGC) that ran at 1 MHz, with only 4KB of RAM and 72KB of ROM, which is a tiny fraction of what your cell phone is capable of.

Missionaries used to leave home, sail (for months) across the world, communicate (delayed

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by weeks) through letters, and often never saw their families again.

You see? Technology changes things, and like always, technological changes can be used for good or for... well... not good.

I don't know anybody who is arguing for the return of bloodletting or abacuses (abacai?), the permanent grounding of all aircraft, the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the Atari 2600, or telephone landlines (though I'd make an argument for that last one... maybe the last two).

But what about things like human cloning, genetic editing, autonomous weaponry (killer robots), space junk in orbit, digital surveillance/ facial recognition, or some of the things advanced

(AI) computing is capable of? Things like deep fake images and videos, which can make it appear (through video "evidence") that a person is actually saying something they never said. I hear plenty of negative static about those things.

How do we manage all this?

The fact is, some of us work in fields that create various sorts of technologies, so for those folk, they do have a very real ability to, if not control, at least speak into the management of these things. Someone in these industries needs to voice the moral question, "Just because we *can* do this, *should* we?" to those in leadership.

Most of us, though, have no meaningful voice into the creation and use of technologies like these. Yet all Christ-followers are responsible to navigate today's technologies with respect to truth and faith and moral goodness and the Fruit of the Spirit by which followers of Jesus live.

So what does that look like? Here are just a few guiding principles that help me...

1. In all creation, only human beings are made in the image of God; and closely related to this, only human beings are recipients of God's indwelling and empowering Holy Spirit.

We humans were given a unique creativity and intelligence that no other created thing possesses. (Maybe that's why it takes massive amounts of materials, space, and energy for a computer to even approach doing what a human brain can do, eh?) The point is, no matter how advanced, technology/AI cannot possess the mind of God because it is not human.

This is especially clearly revealed when God prompts us to do something that is His will, though not logically sensible... like acting in faith, trusting what we cannot physically see, or loving the unlovable or those who will not reciprocate our love. Our miracle-working God operates beyond the physics, chemistry, history and logical boundaries of AI.



Come to Wilmore Free Methodist Church on **Monday, February 26, at 7:00 p.m.** to see this presentation, part of Wilmore's 150th birthday celebration.

Kentucky Humanities
presents Catherine Gaffney as

Mary Todd Lincoln

Mrs. President: A Nation Divided



Kentucky Chautauqua.*
The impact is

dramatic.

Spirit calls to spirit. Deep calls to deep. Only humans are capable of receiving God's Spirit-given wisdom. AI can neither receive nor give it.

2. Jesus, not AI, is the hope of the world.

Certainly, AI is capable of doing amazing things, but AI cannot change a person's heart. Only God can do that, and He does that through human decision and faith in Jesus. That's why Jesus is, as He claims to be, not only the way, the truth and the life but also the light of the world. While AI can give us lots of information, only Jesus can speak to our hearts to make deep clarity possible. AI informs, but Jesus brings peace.

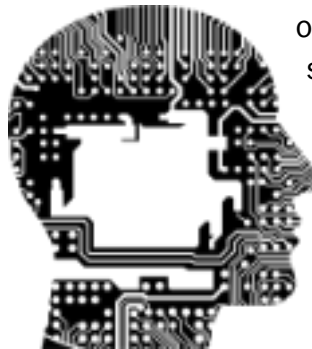
You might say AI can produce amazing deep fakes, but only Jesus can produce deep realities, and in the end, what gives us eternal peace is not what we know. Eternal peace comes from *who* we know.

3. Only God and humans can meet human need.

Yes, I know that you can talk with AI, you can argue with AI, you can create, learn, debate, and solve problems with AI. There is much good available to humanity in the synthesis of the understanding and creative power of such wide-ranging earthly wisdom. But in the end, humans need humans in order to be, ourselves, fully human.

When God said, "It's not good for Adam to be alone," He was commenting on the need for human fellowship, and that's because, again, we're made in His image. God Himself enjoys the fellowship of the Trinity, which suggests that God, Himself, is, in some way, incomplete apart from fellowship.

Babies who receive no engagement after their birth shrivel up and die. That's how important our connections with others are. We need human touch, warmth, speech, love, care, and engagement to be who God intends us to be. In short, we need things only other humans can provide.



4. AI is a tool, not a replacement.

The dangerous temptation with technologies that are as capable as AI is becoming is that we make them a replacement for something in a way that makes things easier for us. Sometimes that's helpful—like in those parts of our work that are rote and meaningless—crunching numbers, finding statistics, definitions, or other basic background information. For that, AI can save us tons of time and effort.

Two big problems come, though, when we try to use AI to replace our engagement with God in our thinking, training, prayer, counseling, writing, creativity or personal engagement with others.

The first is that when we don't think for ourselves, we become weaker, not stronger. Just like we harm ourselves physically when we don't work our muscles, we harm ourselves spiritually, mentally, and relationally when we depend on tech to think and create and relate for us. We lose something of what it means to be human, and we cease to be what God made us to be.

The second problem is that we begin to have problems with integrity, which invariably leads to problems with Jesus. John Piper writes:

I asked ChatGPT to write an "eight-hundred-word answer, in the theology and style of theologian John Piper, to the question, 'What are the dangers of a pastor using AI?'" It took five seconds to produce an 857-word essay that was so good that... you'd never know it wasn't me. And if I had (presented) that to you as my own, it would have been wicked. Wicked! Because this goes to the heart of God and the meaning of Christianity and the integrity of the church. Neither God nor his people speak in a way so as to bring about in the minds of other people thoughts that are not true about us or what we say,

*or feelings in them that are not appropriate about us. Christians do not deceive. We are people of truth and transparency and honesty through and through, or we are nothing.*¹

This means that, unless we are going to make clear at the outset, in writing or spoken words: “This essay / test answer / term paper / sermon / poem / letter / article / newsletter / devotional / illustration / image / painting / song / tune / whatever that I present to you was created not by me but by Artificial Intelligence” —and we all know what our hearers / viewers / professors / congregation / readers would think about that— then we should forget about using AI to create it.

That, and only that, rises to the level of Christian honesty.

Certainly, use AI and other sources for information and even inspiration—just like we’d use commentaries, articles, books, songs, poetry, and human connections in our lives. But for the sake of the work of the Spirit, and for the sake of our own Christian witness and integrity, we have to make sure to keep AI in its place in our lives.

Like Bishop Kolde has recently written:

*The church is not called to expedience. We are called to faithfulness to the Spirit and the Word. As we imperfectly but creatively think, talk, and act in surrender to the Spirit, something beautiful occurs, and a new future become visible. Artificial intelligence, after all, can only learn from what has been done in the past, but the Lord who sits on His throne reminds us that He is making all things new, and humans are God’s unique partners in that promise.”*²

¹ <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/should-i-use-ai-to-help-me-write-sermons>

² <https://lightandlife.fm/what-ai-can-never-do-and-why-this-conversation-matters-in-the-church/>

TECH TALK—RING OUT

By Dan Dotterweich

This past Christmas, the church choir sang a song called “Ring Out.” It was about bells ringing to proclaim the birth of Christ. While that is a glorious sound, the sound of a phone ringing out in church is distracting at best. For many phones, you can automate them to silence during church.

For iPhone

- a. Go to Settings, then Focus, then tap “+” in the upper right.
- b. Select Custom, then give the focus time a name like “Church.”
- c. Pick a color and icon, then tap Next.
- d. Click Customize Focus, then scroll down and tap Add Schedule, then Time.
- e. Set the From and To times to include ABF and church service(s), then change the day selections to only Sundays, then tap the checkmark and you’re all set.



For Android

- a. Go to Settings, then Sound & Vibration or Notifications, then Do Not Disturb.
 - b. Tap Schedules or Add schedule, then set the desired start and end times.
 - c. Choose the days of the week for the schedule.
- For flip phone: Sorry, you have to do that manually.
 - For landline: just leave it at home.



Silencing our phones in worship is a great habit to develop, but of course, especially on busy or distracted mornings, the best of us can still forget to do this from time to time, and that’s OK. When the occasional phone does ring, just think of a bell ringing to proclaim the birth of Christ.

LIBRARY NEWS

By Bonnie Koteskey

New Children's Books: (Loan Period: 3 Weeks)

- *The Legend of the Donkey's Cross*
- *The Swamp Robber—Sugar Creek Gang*
- *The Killer Bear—Sugar Creek Gang*
- *A Child's Book About Teasing*



New Adult Books: (Loan Period: 3 Weeks)

- *Tea with Elephants* by Robin Jones Gunn
- *Paint and Nectar* by Ashley Clark
- *Where the Last Rose Blooms* by Ashley Clark
- *Meta Story: What Marvel and the Messiah Can Teach Us* by Sean Gaffney
- *Faith Doesn't Erase Grief* by Katie Meyer

Please Renew Items Promptly

If you need to renew items, please check with the librarian, Bonnie Koteskey at 859-859-3436 or leave a note on the library bulletin board. It is important to return the materials when they are due so that others can check them out.

ORGANIZING YOUR INFORMATION

By Kimberly Ostroske

"God is not a God of disorder but of peace." (1 Corinthians 14:33 NIV)

Most of us don't like to imagine a moment when we won't be able to manage our own affairs. But that's exactly why organizing your assets and debts ahead of time is a way to exert control over your own life. When everything is clearly documented and easy to understand, someone you trust can step in without panic, guesswork, or legal chaos. It can turn a stressful situation into a manageable one, and that alone is a huge gift to yourself and the people who care about you.

Getting organized means listing bank accounts, investments, property, insurance policies, and also debts like mortgages, loans, and credit cards—along with how they're accessed and paid. When this information is organized in one place, bills don't get missed, assets don't get lost, and

important decisions aren't delayed. In moments of incapacity, time and clarity matter.

Organization keeps small problems from snowballing into expensive or irreversible ones. I have seen this to be helpful to the one doing the organization, as the tasks take less time when all the needed information is in one place. It is also very, very helpful to the one you entrust to take care of your needs if you are unable to do so.

There's also an emotional benefit that's easy to underestimate. Loved ones are already under strain when someone becomes incapacitated. Clear records reduce conflict, confusion, and second-guessing. Instead of arguing over what you "would have wanted" or scrambling to piece things together, they can focus on supporting you and making thoughtful decisions with confidence.

A little effort now can spare your future self—and the people around you—a whole lot of stress later.





Help Our Towns' Children Celebrate Wilmore's 150th Birthday!

February 7, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Children: Registration for children (age 4–grade 5) is now open! We'll have a craft, a time of recreation, and a story where we'll learn about the importance of Jesus and His place in the life of our city. Space is limited. Click here to register:



Guides (adults & teens): We also need guides to take the kids around to different activities. If you are willing to be a guide or help in the kitchen for the finale, please scan the QR code here or sign up at the Welcome Desk:



SENIOR LUNCHEONS ON HOLD UNTIL MARCH

There will be no senior luncheon in January or February. We will resume on **Thursday, March 12**, the second Thursday of the month.



YOUTH MINISTRY The Greatest Joy

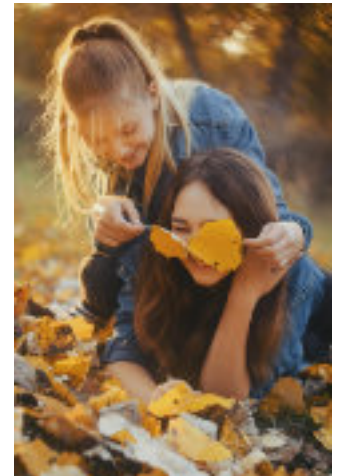
By Caitlyn Gothay

Many people ask what the best part of my job is. There are many, many wonderful things, but my absolute favorite is being able to watch the teens grow in faith, confidence, talents, leadership, etc. I LOVE being the recipient of the question, “Guess what I did?” Whether that be hitting a home run, getting a good grade on a test they were dreading, nailing the job interview, landing a gymnastics move, acing a speech, sharing Jesus with a new friend, or eating an 11-year-expired piece of chocolate without getting sick; I’m here for it! And even more fun than hearing about those things is being a witness to them.

The first youth group after Christmas break is led by the seniors. They plan and execute, and I sit back smiling. Watching two nervous, yet passionate young women lead worship for the first time was an incredible joy. Seeing a young man preach a message of integrity in your Christian witness in and out of the church building made me beam! And the behind-the-scenes work was just as important to make the evening run smoothly with transitions, clean up, and a game. We don’t play games often, but when we do, laughter and joy fill the gym!

I say this often, but I will repeat it again and again. If you don’t know a teenager from our church, find one and get to know him or her; you will be incredibly blessed.

Please keep the youth ministry in your prayers as we make our way through the spring semester. It is filled with trips, special events, and outreach opportunities.



GETTING TO KNOW YOU: GRACE CHOU

By Sue Adkins

Grace Chou was born into a Buddhist home in Taiwan. As a child, she was discouraged from going to church. However, her father sent her to study at a Christian junior high school. There, she was very impressed with her Christian teachers' lives. They were loving and joyful. Grace started longing to become a Christian, too.

A few years later, Grace learned that Christians needed to have a spiritual home—a church:

As I was searching for a church to attend, by the grace of God He led me to join a local church, which offered sound biblical teaching. When I heard the messages from the Gospel of John, the Holy Spirit helped me to understand that Jesus was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. I did not understand what "life" meant at that time, but I knew that I would have life if I believed in Jesus. One night, as I was going to bed, I was compelled to make a decision from my inner voice. It was a gentle and loving invitation that called me to enter the abundant life that only Jesus could give. I felt I could do nothing but accept Jesus's invitation, so I prayed that I would believe Jesus and follow Him. From that point on, I no longer feared that the dark spirits would harm me, because I knew Jesus had victory over them.

Grace was called to serve the Lord while she was attending university. After working as a teaching and research assistant, she went on to attend seminary, where she sensed the Lord's call to be a Bible translator. She joined Wycliffe Bible Translators and Summer Institute of Linguistics and went to Southeast Asia to serve as a linguist



and Bible translation consultant for about twenty-five years.

Grace moved to Wilmore in August of 2022 to start working on her doctorate in intercultural studies:

I sensed a call to serve the Southeast Asian migrant workers in Taiwan. I know that migrant workers are a small picture of globalization. I felt a need to be more equipped to serve them more effectively. I was not very interested in taking more studies, but I suspected the Lord's calling. It did not seem to be possible for me to be able to come to Asbury, but the Lord guided me, one step at a time.

Grace is currently working on her doctoral dissertation. She plans to return to Taiwan this spring to do her site research there and expects to finish her degree in another year and a half.

Grace began attending WPMC soon after she came to Wilmore. Her home church in Taipei, Taiwan, was a Free Methodist church where she became a new believer, was baptized, was encouraged to serve, grew spiritually, and was supported as a missionary. Grace was excited to discover that there was a Free Methodist church within walking distance of her dorm here in Wilmore, and she has been attending our church ever since!

In her leisure time, Grace enjoys exercising—jogging, cycling, and strength training. She also enjoys visiting people in the community, and recently she has joined the Common Threads group here at WPMC and has taken up crocheting again.

We welcome Grace to the fellowship of our Common Threads group and to the family of believers of Wilmore Free Methodist Church!

BIRTHDAYS / ANNIVERSARIES

February Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 1 Elisa Clark, Wellington Hall
- 2 Faye Montgomery, Marianne Van Horn
- 3 Amie Hall
- 7 Paul Hamann, Ann Warnock
- 8 Jessica Elayaraj, Joan Johnson
- 9 Howard Snyder, *Bob & Cindy Peterson*
- 10 Patty Brown
- 11 Bonnie Koteskey
- 12 Jessica Bowers
- 15 Glen Ellwood, Betty Johnston, Dan Owsley
- 16 Dottie Bowen
- 17 Charlotte Mattocks, PR Roher
- 18 Kylie Kawaja
- 20 Ken Pennington, Aurelia Stiger
- 21 Missy Upton
- 22 Eduardo Angelo, Jerry Marchal
- 24 Dean Cook, Alex Hall
- 25 Van Anderson, Acacia Beaty, James Evans, Chuck Fuller, Dexter Porter
- 26 Ann Dotterweich, Ruth Hersey, Rachel Powdrill
- 27 Haley Montgomery, Rebekah Saunders
- 28 Abigail Diddle, Paul Jacobson
- 29 Annette Diddle



March Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 1 Brian Kidwell, Timothy Sims
- 2 Wes Blankenship, Darlene Russell
- 3 *Tim & Bari Kay McMillen, Michael & Jackie Silvers*
- 5 Norma Jean Erny, Rachael Proctor
- 6 Merianne Dietrich, Margaret Reeves, Wyatt Weinberger
- 7 Joe Bowen, Katie Diddle, Dan Dotterweich, Ruth Gouge, Andrew Montoya
- 8 Matthew Branan, Philip Todd, *David & Patti McPeake*
- 9 Maquel Sarantakos
- 10 Ashlyn DiFranco
- 11 Myrna Hale, Ken Proctor Jr., Olivia Proctor, Emily Randall
- 12 Shirley Hamilton, James Proctor
- 13 Cazavion Joiner, Nadara Welling
- 14 Charlie Fiskeaux, Marcia Miller
- 15 Ethan Adams, Luke Youngblood
- 16 Suzanna Walsh
- 17 Darlene Anderson, Evelyn Freeman, Peggy Thurman, *Glen & Nancy Ellwood*
- 18 Troy Randall, Thane Ury
- 20 Eloise O'Neal, *Dan & Ann Dotterweich*
- 21 Rowan Fiskeaux, Chris Wittenberg
- 22 Daisy Chen
- 23 Duane Cassidy, Conrad Gothay, Maxwell Gothay, Asha McFarlane
- 24 Daniel Brabon
- 25 Chris Bauer, *Wes & Susan Folsom*
- 26 Gwen Crabtree
- 27 Katy Beth Searls
- 28 Hudson Bryant, Noah Bryant, Davis Tillson
- 29 Carolyn Rumble
- 30 Hepziba Arputharaj, Heather Hall



BLANKETS FOR KENTUCKY FOSTER CHILDREN

By Amy Kin nel

The women of WPMC recently donated more than fifty hand-knotted blankets to Kentucky children in foster care or kinship placements. The effort was initially spearheaded by Alma Cornet as a craft project at our women's retreat. Elsie O'Neal engaged the help of her family over the holidays to contribute eight blankets. Then, Anna Van Horn picked up the mantle with her pre-school class at the Wilmore Foundations Academy, and they completed three more blankets. The class was able to practice their fine motor skills of tying knots and learned to help other kids who may not have a favorite blanket to provide them warmth and comfort.

The blankets were distributed at a holiday party thrown by Be the Village, a Kentucky non-profit organization that provides wrap-around services for children in foster care or in kinship placements with extended family members. The party provided hope and encouragement for more than 150 kids and their families in South-central Kentucky, and each child was able to choose his or her own blanket, along with receiving additional holiday gifts.

A week before the party, coordinators realized that they were ninety blankets short of the number that they needed. Through word of mouth, the women of WPMC were able to provide fifty-three blankets just in time for the party. For more information about Be the Village, please see their website: <https://www.bethevillageky.com>. A huge thank-you to all the women who helped with this project!



LADIES NIGHT OUT

By Ginny Proctor and Rachael Proctor

All ladies are welcome to join us on the first Monday evening of each month* at 6:00 p.m. for Ladies Night Out (LNO). After a long winter, we are looking forward to starting our new LNO season, and we hope you are, too. Our new season begins in March and goes through November. Please add the following dates to your calendar:



March 2

Fazoli's Italian Restaurant
1016 N.Main St. Nicholasville

April 13*

Peppers Mexican Grill
220 N Plaza Dr, Nicholasville

May 4

Athenian Grill
3801 Mall Rd #120, Lexington

June 1

Chicken Salad Chick
254 E Brannon Rd, Nicholasville

July 6

Smashing Tomato
3801 Mall Rd #195, Lexington

August 3

Chili's
108 Marketplace Dr, Lexington
(turn left onto Man-O-War, then take first right)

September 14*

BJ's Restaurant
3297 Nicholasville Rd, Lexington
(far north end of Fayette Mall's parking lot)

October 12*

Sonny's BBQ
109 N Plaza Dr, Nicholasville

November 2

Culver's
961 N Main St, Nicholasville

**If the first Monday is a holiday, LNO will take place on the second Monday (e.g. September)
We look forward to having you with us! Questions? Call or text Ginny Proctor at 859-553-9784.*

PARENTING PERSPECTIVES

Beginning Wednesday, March 4, Pastor Daryl and Annette will host an informal gathering for any who are interested in exploring the challenges of parenting. The "class" will combine some principles that have proven worthwhile to them (and some that haven't), stories, current and timeless parenting issues, along with a time for questions and answers.

Pastor Daryl says, "We approach this with great humility. Annette and I recognize that situations and children are all different and we don't pretend to think that we have all the answers. At the same time, we want to at least offer some wisdom that has worked for us and may work for others in today's challenging parenting environment."

Wednesday nights, 7:00–8:00 p.m.
March 4–25, Room B107

**PARENTING
PERSPECTIVES**

THE MONEY MINUTE

The Stewardship of \$5 a Day (Part 3)

By John Swaim and Larry Winkleman

The identical couples with the identical amount of money (\$5 a day) over the identical amount of time (15 years) spent or saved the identical amount of money (15 years \times 365 days per year \times \$5 per day = \$27,375). So, why at the end of 15 years were the identical couples \$189,049 apart? The difference is compound interest. Sam and Sarah's savings earn 7% while Steve and Sally's borrowing cost them 18%. Identical couples with unidentical models of stewardship.

Biblical stewardship recognizes that ALL our resources (time, talents, relationships, money) come from and belong to God. He entrusts resources to us; we are to manage them wisely.

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So, if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"
(Luke 16:10–12 NIV)

Here are some practical, biblical guidelines for stewardship:

- Ron Blue (Kingdom Advisors) was asked to offer simple financial advice for young couples. He thought for a moment then said, "**Spend less than you make and do it for a long time.**"
- **Start with a budget.** List your monthly income and monthly expenses in detail (Luke 14:28–30). If your expenses are higher than your income, change your lifestyle. Live within your means. Show that you can be trusted with little

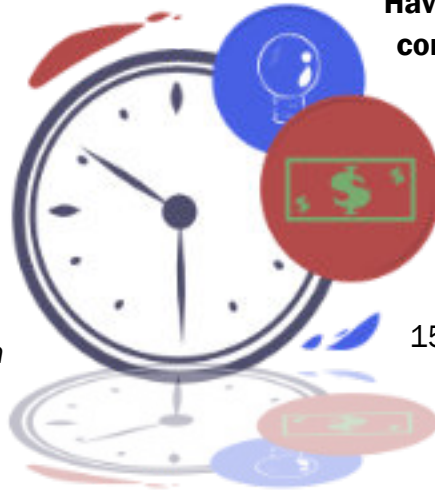
(Luke 16:10). Your budget, like Sam and Sarah's, should include giving and saving.

- There are three components to saving: (1) the amount, (2) the rate of return, and (3) time. The component most people focus on is the one they have the least control over: rate of return. It fluctuates in the short term, but wise investors know there will be a positive rate of return over the long term. Sam and Sarah were disciplined in saving (\$5 per day \times 365 days per year \times 45 years = \$82,125) and by compound interest it grew 7-fold to \$582,150.

Have the discipline to save consistently every day, year after year, and it will result in a strong retirement.

- **Avoid debt, especially credit card debt.** Credit cards have high interest rates, and debt grows quickly. Steve and Sally spent 15 years digging a debt hole and should not expect to get out of it overnight and without some pain. But it will be well worth it and a source of great pride and peace when they do.
- **Seek wise and trusted advice.** Both Sam and Sarah (from the beginning) and then Steve and Sally (15 years later) connected with Fred, the financial advisor. Once Steve and Sally were willing to be honest and transparent with Fred, he showed them where they were headed (deep debt) and then put together a plan that would work for them. Do not try to do it alone; find a wise and trusted advisor and be disciplined in following a new plan.

"Whoever can be trusted with little can be trusted with much" (Luke 16:10). Like Sam and Sarah, you can commit to living a life of stewardship for as little as \$5 a day.



TAKE NOTE

By Rose Evans



Music Ensembles

If you have not yet been able to join one of our many music ensembles, there is opportunity for you to join us in the new year. Also, if you are interested in using your musical gifts as a soloist, we welcome the opportunity to talk with you. If you are an instrumentalist, please contact Mark Schell, and if you are interested in vocal music ministry, please contact Rose Evans. Let's continue to offer our musical gifts to the Lord!

Important Dates to Remember

Mark your calendars now for these important music dates in the coming months:

March 15	6:00 p.m.	"Sunrise Mass" Choral Presentation
March 29	6:00 p.m.	Youth Choir Musical: "Prodigal"
April 5	8:30 & 11:00 a.m.	Easter morning (the choir will present two anthems)
April 20	7:00 p.m.	Spring Ring
April 26	6:00 p.m.	Heaven's Harmony Children's Musical
May 3	8:30 & 11:00 a.m.	Singing Celebration

Heaven's Harmony Musical



Be sure to join Heaven's Harmony on **Sunday night, April 26**, as they present their musical, "A Not So Terrible Parable."

The well-known story that Jesus told, called The Parable of the Good Samaritan, comes to life as a fun, over-the-top whodunit (think the movie, Clue). Solving this mystery means discovering again just how far our Savior would go to rescue helpless sinners!

Short-term Vocal Ensemble Opportunities!



Easter Anthems on **April 5** "Singing Celebration" on **May 3**

This spring the sanctuary choir will prepare music for both morning services on Easter morning (April 5) as well as for the "Singing Celebration" on May 3. We welcome singers interested in making a short-term commitment to an ensemble to join us as we prepare music for these special events. Be sure to check future weekly bulletins for more detailed announcements regarding rehearsals, etc. Please come and join us!

LAMPS LIT AT DUSK

By Aaron Raymond

Human tendency tempts us to nostalgically revisit both our personal and collective past as a highlight reel with carefully curated memories. But scripture invites a more humble and sober posture: one that tells the truth about success and failure alike. The church, especially in seasons of cultural anxiety, must resist the urge to baptize nostalgia and instead learn how to pray faithfully in the present moment.

At the beginning of the fifth century, Augustine of Hippo found himself in such a moment. Rome, the “eternal city,” had been sacked by the Visigoths, but were displaced by the Huns. Refugees streamed across the empire. Many blamed this new upstart religion, Christianity, for Rome’s decline, accusing believers of abandoning the old gods and the old ways of conventional civic virtue. Augustine responded by writing *The City of God*, not to defend Rome, but to tell the truth about history and hope. Every earthly power, he argued, rises and falls. What endures is not Empire, but love, rightly ordered toward God. Augustine distinguished between two cities. The City of Man is shaped by self-love that ultimately turns inward and seeks control. But the City of God is shaped by the love of God, a love that turns outward, even when that love costs us status, certainty, or comfort. Crucially, Augustine insisted that these cities are not identical with any political system, nation, or movement. They are intermingled throughout history and, as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn later observed, the line between good and evil runs through every human heart. This truth should humble us, but it should also give us hope.

So, how can this inform our prayer life? First, prayer reorients us away from anxiety over outcomes and toward fidelity in love. If no earthly institution, government, or economic

system fully embodies the kingdom of God, then prayer cannot be primarily about preserving regimes, winning cultural battles, or restoring an Edenic lost “golden age.” Prayer orders our loves toward God right now, right where we are.

Second, prayer is the language of the pilgrim. Christians are resident aliens. We’re grateful for social order. We pray for all of our leaders. And we work for peace and reconciliation. Yet we should be careful not to confuse our own stability, or that of our nation’s, with salvation. We pray for enough peace to practice justice, mercy, and holiness. But what we do not pray for is for history to stop changing. As Augustine might say to his contemporaries, “Good luck!”

Third, prayer is a school of humility. The City of Man seeks dominance; prayer confesses dependence. Especially in times of decline or uncertainty, prayer resists both despair and the temptation to control. It trains us to accept our finitude without surrendering our hope.

Lastly, prayer is eschatological without being escapist. When we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we are not asking for our empires to be restored but for our loves to be reordered. Prayer changes us inwardly and sends us outward in patient, faithful endurance. Augustine lived at dusk, as the light of his civilization faded. He refused denial, “It’s not getting dark,” or hysteria, “The night has already won.” Instead, he taught the church to light lamps. Lamps do not restore daylight. And they are not a floodlight on the culture. They help us remain human in the dark. They are humble, tended, and placed carefully to guide our steps.

Prayer, then, is lamp-lighting at the threshold. Prayer is hope without illusion. Prayer is faith without need for nostalgia. Prayer is love practiced faithfully as we await the coming kingdom of God.



WILMORE FOUNDATIONS ACADEMY

Why the Church Parking Lot Is So Full During the Week

By Anna Joy Bryson

I am grateful for the opportunity to tell you about Wilmore Foundations Academy (WFA), a homeschool co-op that regularly meets in our church building, and to share a bit about its purpose. Wilmore Foundations Academy meets in every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. During this time, families partner together to support and enrich their children's education in a structured, Christ-centered environment.

WFA exists to come alongside parents as they educate their children, offering instruction on subjects such as history, Bible, and literature, while also encouraging a love for learning, strong character, and a biblical worldview. Currently, the co-op serves 82 students and is supported by

20 teachers and staff members who are committed to investing in the next generation.

While WFA is grateful to meet in our church building, it is important to note that WFA operates separately from WFMC and is not a ministry of the church itself. We are thankful for the opportunity to extend hospitality and support families who are seeking to raise and educate their children with faith and purpose.

Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and understanding as our building is used throughout the week to serve families in our community. If you have any questions, please email anna@wilmorefoundationsacademy.com or call 859-940-4372.



PRISON MINISTRY

By Ted Moon

Of the 23 inmates who attended last month's Sunday's service, there were only two returning inmates. Praise the Lord! One of the inmates came up and asked when we came and I told him the fourth Sunday of each month. Then I added that I hoped (and would pray) he would not be there in December. He said if he was, he would definitely be coming back again to the church service.

We had a very attentive group. We sang three Thanksgiving hymns with gusto. After sharing the story of the Pilgrims and the Thanksgiving presentation, we broke into two groups. Each person shared five things that he was thankful for. Then I wrote the word Thanksgiving on the board and asked them to come up with things they were thankful for that began with the letters in the word Thanksgiving. They came up with some interesting words.



After we finished, we handed out candy and stamped envelopes (the youth group helped assemble and stamp them, including a page from the Daily Bread devotional) so they could write to their loved ones. Before we left, three inmates asked for individual prayer. We did not hand out Bibles, instead putting them on a table and letting them know they could have one if they would like one. They all were taken. Several of the inmates took two so that they could give one of them to a fellow cell mate.

Thanks for your continued prayers for this ministry.

—Ted Moon, Hugh Sims, Craig Saunders, Charlie Payne



CORRECTION: In the December/January issue of *The Plumblne*, the "Prayer" article was incorrectly credited. The article was written by Jonathan Raymond. Our apologies for this error.



If you would prefer to receive *The Plumblne* electronically, email Pastor Daryl at ddiddle@wfmc.net, and you'll be added to the email distribution list.

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VISION STATEMENT

*A Community that Reflects Jesus'
Vision and Values*

MISSION STATEMENT

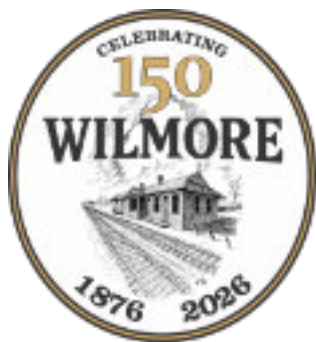
*Wilmore Free Methodist Church
will faithfully offer members
and neighbors the Word of God,
the love of the Father, the grace
of Jesus, and the power of the
Holy Spirit. We will be Christ's
presence in our world.*



The Plumblne

Newsletter of the Wilmore Free Methodist Church

February/March 2026



February 7, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Our Towns' Children Celebrate
Wilmore's 150th Birthday!

February 26, 7:00 p.m.

A presentation of "Mary Todd Lincoln—
Mrs. President: A Nation Divided"