THE MESSENGER

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH SPLENDORA

Worship Passionately, Love Extravagantly and Witness Boldy

November 2026

firstmethodistchurchsplendora.org **Rev. Steven G. Lightfoot, Pastor**

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

The Cross and Self-Denial

Rev. Steven G. Lightfoot

[24] Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. [25] For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. [26] For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? [27] "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. [28] Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."
– Matthew 16:24-28

While it is usually best to look at a passage of scripture as a whole so that we can get the larger picture, the context behind the individual verses, today I want to dissect Matthew 16 a bit and look specifically at verses 24 and 25 because I think people today are in need of a reminder of what following Jesus really means.

Verse 25 says, "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it." What are the ways we attempt to save our lives? To what characteristic of human nature is Jesus referring? Is he talking about our natural instinct as humans to avoid danger that might cause us injury or death? Is He referring to our tendency to conform to the majority, to go along with the crowd in an attempt to avoid conflict? Is He speaking of our relentless search for self-satisfaction, self-gratification, and other narcissistic self-interests? Is He talking about our natural desire to have things our way, on our terms, to be in control of our lives, our destiny, our wants, needs, desires?

If we look at the state of the world today, I'd say Jesus was speaking about all of the above. We have a natural tendency as fallen creatures in a broken world to do all of the above and worse. We value our infinitesimal lives on earth more than we value our infinite lives with our Heavenly Father.

There is a wonderful illustration wherein a man has a long, long rope, hundreds of feet, and at the very tip of the rope he has painted red about three inches. The tiny red tip represents our time on earth; the vast length of rope stretching for hundreds of feet represents our lives in eternity. The ironic thing about we humans is that we spend all of our lives on earth worrying and toiling for the little red tip of the rope, when the purpose of the little red

(Continued on Page 2)
(Continued from page 1)

tip is not to prepare us for the end of the red tip, but for the beginning of our eternal lives ahead of us; the long, long rope ahead of us! We are so focused on saving our lives here, that we miss the point of this little section entirely, which determines where we spend the rest of the rope extending into the eternal future!

The question is where will you spend eternity? Will you have accepted Jesus during your time on earth, so that you can spend the rest of eternity with Him? Or will you reject God's grace and mercy; will you reject Jesus and spend the rest of eternity separated from Him in Hell? What you decide in your time in the red tip of the rope determines where you spend the rest of your time-immeasurable on the larger rope.

So, how do we ensure our eternity with God? Counter-intuitively to the way the world thinks, we save our lives by losing them to Jesus Christ. By surrendering ourselves and our independence and by becoming totally dependent on Christ. It's difficult for us because we are culturally ingrained with self-reliance, self-interest and self-interested tendencies, but we must learn to let go of our worldly tendencies, we must surrender ourselves so that we can claim our God-given identities; the identity God created us to have; the identity of the image and likeness of God Himself.

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. [25] For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. [26] For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

[27] "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. [28] Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Jesus' return is imminent… His last comment in that passage was directed at us, not those physically there before Him when He spoke those words… directed to us, you and me. "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

At some point, only God the Father knows when, those words will reach the ears of some who will see them come to pass… it might be us. And if Jesus does come before we reach the end of the red tip of the rope, will you be ready? Will you have made the choice to continue into eternity with Him, …or will you spend the vast length of the eternal rope without Him?

By His Grace,
Pastor Steven†



Thank you to all who served our Nation with honor and bravery.
Remembering our Veterans
November 11, 2026



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1st- Sunday Worship
Holy Communion & All Saints' Day 9AM*
Sunday School 10:15AM
3rd- *Election Day—Vote!*
4th- Dinner & Bible Study 5:30PM
8th- Sunday Worship 9AM
Sunday School 10:15AM
Board of Stewards Meeting 12:45PM
11th- *Veterans' Day*
Dinner & Bible Study 5:30PM
15th- Sunday Worship 9AM*
Adult Sunday School 10:15M
Children's Sunday School 10:15AM
18th- Dinner & Bible Study 5:30PM
21st- Food Pantry Day 9AM
Volunteers needed
22nd- Sunday Worship 9AM*
Adult Sunday School 10:15M
25th- No dinner or Bible Study
26th- *Thanksgiving Day*
28th- Nativity Set-up 10AM
29th- Laity led Sunday Worship 9AM*
First Sunday in Advent
Adult Sunday School 10:15M
Live Nativity Dress Rehearsal 5:30PM
***Worship In-person or Online**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

+Sunday, Dec. 6, 2026 Live Nativity Pageant 5:30PM
(Rain date Sunday, Dec. 13th 5:30PM)
+Saturday, Dec. 19th
Ladies' Luncheon 11:30AM
+Thursday, Dec. 24th- Christmas Eve Service at Shepherd Methodist





NOVEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES AND BIRTHDAYS

1 **John Duke**
3 Sarah Dams
6 **Ava Level**
9 Richard & **Ava** Level
♥ 9 *Daniel Perez SR*
22 **Ann Elliott**
23 **Ramona Ferguson**
♥ 24 **Brenda Storey**
25 Michael & **Joanna** Bonnette
26 **Karl Keith**
27 **Gloria Cox**
29 Dan Graves



LIVE NATIVITY

Sunday, December 6th @ 6:00PM will be our Live Nativity, retelling the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.
This is a celebratory gift to our Community. This live action, including real animals and real people will include Christmas Singing and Reception following the Pageant. Bring your lawn chairs and dress for cool weather as it

will be outdoors.
Invite your friends and neighbors. All children will receive a gift bag to remember the event. Hope to see you then!



PRAYER REQUESTS

"…my prayers, O LORD; hear my urgent cry. I will call to You when trouble strikes, and You will answer me."---Psalm 86:6-7

Our Pastor and Angela
William Frazier - Peace, Strength and Guidance
Linda Dunaway - Healing
David Goodrum
Terrie Dove
Shirley & Bob Adams
Charlie Kincannon
Linda Wineman - Health
Josh Wineman
Little Charlotte Goodrum - Sick
McAdams Family-grief
Craig & Christie Hantelman - Health
Sandie & Anne - Health
Ellis Duke - Patience and Wisdom
Joey Masterson - Faith and Healing
Jacob, Kaitlyn, Brandi Masterson - Faith
Linda Duke - Faith and Healing
Sean Hales - Faith
Merle Fritz - Continued Healing
Gary Fritz - Healing and Strength
Charles & Mawanna Jones - Mawana is back home from the hospital.
Allyson & Cory
Cadence & Kacey Welch
Patty & Allen Dye
Cindy Reed
Wilma Martinez
Darlene Trapp
Lavada Linquist
Chari Ricks
Brenda Storey - Continued Healing
Barbara Martin - Continue Healing
The Dryden Family - Lost their home in a fire
Dayton Family - 14 year old that was killed in a hit and run
Bob Guttenberger
Brandy Smart - Health
Smart & Blake Families
Caleb & Abbi Barroso
Mary Lou Perez - Healing
Karl Keith - Healing
The Van Ostrand Family
Allen and Wanda Anderson
Flavio & Linda Del Angel-grief
Chantel Willson
Debbie Szmanski
Gary @ Turbo Valves
Ralph Madonna
Linnea Hickman-wisdom
Gabe Solomon- protection
Church Conference
Our Church and Country
Unspoken

YOUR GIVING

"What?! You forgot your check this Sunday?" No worries! Use the QR Codes listed below and your gift to the church is sent immediately.

Electronic gifts will be included in your annual giving statement and are tax-deductible.

PAY PAL

TITHELY

Our church will always continue to accept your gifts by check and cash, but you now have other options when you need it. Remember to link your Kroger Card to our church ED607.

Thank you for your gifts to our church. “God loves a cheerful giver!”