**Windermere Union Church Newsletter**

*Provoking Thought. Inspiring Spirit. Accepting All.*

# A Note from Pastor Brad

Dear Church Family,

Every season in the life of Windermere Union Church brings with it new joys, challenges, and opportunities to live out our calling as God’s people. As I look at the events in this newsletter, I see more than dates on a calendar—I see stories of love, service, laughter, and community. I see children practicing songs that will remind us of Bethlehem and the holy mystery of Emmanuel—God with us. I see hands preparing meals that will comfort hungry neighbors and bring light into places where hope sometimes feels scarce. I see friendships deepening around dinner tables and living rooms, reminding us that fellowship is one of God’s greatest gifts. I see hearts opening through the power of music, worship, and prayer, and I see the Spirit weaving these moments together into something larger than any one of us could create on our own.

My prayer is that this newsletter will be more than information—it will be an invitation. An invitation to connect with one another in genuine love. An invitation to serve, to stretch ourselves, and to discover Christ in the face of those we meet. An invitation to celebrate life’s blessings—whether in song, in service, or in simple acts of kindness. And perhaps most importantly, an invitation to grow deeper in faith together, trusting that God is always doing something new among us.

Our church is more than a building or a schedule of activities; it is a living story God is still writing. Each time you show up—whether you are singing with the choir, serving a meal, joining in prayer, or simply offering a word of encouragement—you are shaping that story. Your presence matters. Your gifts matter. You matter.

So, I invite you to step into this new season with open hearts and hopeful spirits. May we continue to embody the love of Christ in all that we do, so that when people encounter Windermere Union Church, they don’t just find a congregation—they find a family.

With love and gratitude,
Pastor Brad

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# September 2025

## 🎶 Let Your Voice Be Heard

Every Tuesday at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary

There’s something sacred about voices rising together. On Tuesday evenings at Windermere Union Church, the sanctuary fills with a kind of joy that doesn’t come from polished performance but from honest, heartfelt singing.

Some arrive with trained voices, carrying years of choir experience. Others walk in nervously, admitting they can’t quite hold a note but love to hum along. All are welcomed the same. Troy, our Choir Director, greets each person with encouragement, reminding them that every voice is a gift from God.

Over time, the laughter grows louder than the wrong notes. Shy singers begin to raise their voices with confidence. Strangers become friends as they share snacks after rehearsal or stories about their week. For many, choir night becomes more than practice—it becomes family.

“The choir is more than music—it is ministry.”

And when Sunday morning comes, those voices aren’t just leading hymns. They’re leading us into worship with the reminder that we, too, belong to something larger than ourselves.

## 🤝 Fellowship Group – September 26

Thursday, September 26 at the home of Ron and Lin Wilensky

There’s a warmth that comes from gathering in someone’s living room that can’t be replicated in a church hall. On September 26, that warmth will come from the home of Ron and Lin Wilensky as they host our next Fellowship Group.

The evening will be simple: food, conversation, and prayer. But it’s in those simple moments that faith deepens. Around couches and dining tables, people who were once strangers discover common stories. Longtime members share wisdom. Newcomers feel a little less like guests and more like family.

As the night goes on, laughter often mingles with stories of challenge and hope. Someone might share about a grandchild’s first steps, while another might quietly speak about a recent hardship. In both cases, the group listens, prays, and stands together.

“Faith grows best when it is shared around a table.”

By the end of the evening, the Wilenskys’ home will feel like holy ground—a place where community has been built and God’s Spirit has been felt in the ordinary warmth of fellowship.

## 🎭 Tap Into Theater – September 28

Sunday, September 28 during Morning Worship

On September 28, worship at Windermere Union Church will hold something special: a performance from the Tap Into Theater Academy Youth Group. Their chosen piece, “Alone in the Universe” from Seussical Jr., tells the story of believing in dreams others cannot yet see.

As the youth rehearse, you can see their excitement and a little nervousness. But on Sunday morning, when the lights hit and the first notes are sung, something bigger happens. Their voices carry more than a melody—they carry hope, innocence, and the courage to share their gifts with the church.

For those in the pews, it will be more than a performance. It will be a reminder that faith is often like theater—stepping into roles bigger than ourselves, trusting the story will carry us. The young performers will embody what it means to believe even when others doubt, to dream when the world seems to say otherwise.

“When children and youth take the stage, something shifts.”

And in that shift, the congregation will see that worship is not confined to hymns and sermons. Worship is alive in the creativity and courage of young people who remind us that God’s story is still unfolding in unexpected ways.

# October 2025

## 🏆 Christian Service Awards Breakfast

Friday, October 10, 8:00–10:00 AM

Every fall, the Christian Service Center gathers friends, churches, and community leaders for a morning of food and inspiration. On October 10, our Windermere Union Church family will take part in the Christian Service Awards & Annual Breakfast.

The tables will be filled with coffee, warm food, and conversation. But what fills the room most is gratitude—the kind that comes from lives touched by compassion. Stories will be shared of men and women who embody the gospel in practical ways: feeding the hungry, sheltering the vulnerable, and standing with the marginalized. These are not celebrities or public figures, but ordinary people who quietly, faithfully live out God’s love in their neighborhoods.

For those who attend, it is more than a breakfast—it is a window into God’s work alive in Orlando. The awards remind us that service is not just a task; it is a calling. Our church’s presence at this event is an affirmation that we, too, are committed to being Christ’s hands and feet in the world.

“Compassion is contagious, and service is how love becomes visible.”

## 🎶 Orlando Gay Chorus in Worship

Sunday, October 12 during Morning Worship

On October 12, our sanctuary will be filled with music that is not only beautiful but also prophetic. The Orlando Gay Chorus will join us in worship, bringing with them voices that proclaim dignity, hope, and belonging.

Their presence is more than a performance—it is a testimony. Each note sung is a declaration that God’s love is wide enough for all people. In a world that too often silences LGBTQ voices, their music rises as both defiance and invitation: defiance against exclusion, invitation into a community where all are welcomed and celebrated.

For our congregation, it will be a Sunday to remember. As harmonies fill the sanctuary, hearts will be lifted, tears may fall, and hope will be rekindled. Music has always been one of God’s greatest gifts to the church, and on this day, that gift will remind us of the wideness of God’s mercy.

“Every note they sing is a proclamation of God’s radical welcome.”

## 🛏️ Sleep in Heavenly Peace – Building Beds for Children

Saturday, October 18, 11:00 AM–3:00 PM, Windermere Town Hall

What if the simplest gift you could give was a bed? On October 18, volunteers from Windermere Union Church will gather with tools in hand to build beds for children who would otherwise be sleeping on the floor.

There will be sawdust, hammers ringing, and the smell of fresh-cut wood. But beyond the noise and busyness, something deeply spiritual will be happening. Every frame built is a prayer in action. Every mattress delivered is a blessing of dignity. Children who may never have known the comfort of their own bed will, because of this effort, fall asleep safely and warmly that night.

Families will gather around these beds with tears of gratitude, and our church will be living out Christ’s command to “let the little ones come.” In these simple acts of service, the kingdom of God breaks in—not in grand gestures, but in practical, love-filled action.

“Each bed built is a sermon of love that children will sleep in night after night.”

## 🍴 Culinary Club – Outpost Neighborhood Tavern

Sunday, October 20 at 6:30 PM

On October 20, the WUC Culinary Club will gather once again, this time at the Outpost Neighborhood Tavern. For some, these monthly outings have become a favorite tradition—a chance to try new food, discover local gems, and, most importantly, share life together.

The meal itself will be enjoyable, of course. But what makes the night meaningful are the conversations. Around the table, laughter flows easily, and friendships deepen. Stories are swapped about work, family, travel, and faith. For newcomers, it is an easy entry point into the life of the church—no pressure, just good company and good food.

By the end of the evening, bellies are full, hearts are lighter, and the bonds of fellowship are stronger. Dining together has always been sacred, from Jesus breaking bread with his disciples to our potlucks and dinners out. The Culinary Club is our modern expression of that holy tradition.

“Breaking bread together is one of the holiest traditions we share.”

## 🎭 TITA in Worship – “Little Girls” from Annie

Sunday, October 26 during Morning Worship

On October 26, our worship service will sparkle with the energy of the Tap Into Theater Academy performers. They will present “Little Girls” from the beloved musical Annie.

At first, the humor and energy of the song will bring smiles. But beneath the entertainment lies something deeper: a celebration of creativity, of young voices daring to step onto a stage and share their gifts with the church. Worship will feel a little different that day, but also richer—because art, humor, and theater are as much a reflection of God’s image as prayer and song.

The congregation will be reminded that joy is holy, laughter is sacred, and God delights in the creativity of God’s children.

“God delights in the creativity of God’s children.”

## 🍽️ Serving at West Orange Christian Service Center

First Sunday Evening of Each Month, 5:00 PM

Every first Sunday evening, a group from Windermere Union Church gathers at the West Orange Christian Service Center to serve a meal to our neighbors in need. On the surface, it looks like a simple act—ladling soup, handing out plates, pouring drinks. But anyone who has stood behind the serving table knows it is more than that.

It is a moment of connection. Names are learned, stories are shared, dignity is restored. For some of our neighbors, this meal may be the only one they receive that day. For others, it is the rare moment where they feel seen and cared for. And for our volunteers, it is a reminder that Christ himself meets us in the hungry and the poor.

Month after month, this ministry becomes a rhythm of grace. It is ordinary and extraordinary all at once. And it is one of the ways our church lives out its call to love our neighbor as ourselves.

“In serving a meal, we find we are being fed as well.”

# November 2025

## 🙌 Youth Serving at Second Harvest

Saturday, November 15, 1:00–4:00 PM

On November 15, our WUC youth will gather at Second Harvest Food Bank, hairnets on, gloves ready, and hearts open. They’ll spend the afternoon sorting, packing, and preparing food that will travel across Central Florida to families in need.

What may look like simple tasks—stacking cans, sealing boxes, bagging rice—becomes a holy act of service when done in love. For our youth, it is an opportunity to put faith into action, to see with their own eyes the reality of hunger in our community, and to know that their hands can make a difference.

The work is often filled with laughter, teamwork, and friendly competition—who can pack the fastest, who can carry the heaviest box. But beneath the fun, there’s a deeper lesson: faith is not just about words we say in worship, but about actions we take in the world.

“Young hands can carry the weight of hope.”

For the families who will open those boxes of food, the impact is immeasurable. And for our youth, the experience will shape them into disciples who know that service is at the very heart of following Jesus.

## 🍴 Culinary Club – Whispering Canyon Café

Monday, November 17, 6:30 PM

On November 17, the Culinary Club will meet at Disney’s Whispering Canyon Café, a restaurant known for its hearty food and playful atmosphere. The evening will be filled with jokes from the servers, plates piled high with barbecue, and plenty of laughter echoing across the table.

For those who attend, the night is about more than food. It’s about belonging. Around the table, church members and friends connect in a way that feels natural and easy. Stories are shared, new friendships begin, and the community of faith grows stronger—one meal at a time.

The Culinary Club reminds us that fellowship doesn’t always need a formal agenda. Sometimes, the simple act of sitting together over a meal is enough. Jesus himself spent much of his ministry at tables—breaking bread, pouring wine, listening, laughing, and teaching.

“At the table, friendships are seasoned with joy.”

Whispering Canyon will provide the setting, but it is the company that will make the night memorable.

## 🍲 Lunch at Matthew’s Hope

Second Thursday of Each Month, 12:00–1:00 PM

Every second Thursday, a group from Windermere Union Church heads to Matthew’s Hope to provide breakfast for our homeless neighbors. It is a ministry of presence as much as provision. The food nourishes, yes—but so do the smiles, the conversations, and the reminder that no one is forgotten.

The menu is often simple, but the love behind it is rich. Volunteers serve with kindness, pausing to ask names, to listen to stories, and to share words of encouragement. For many who come through the line, being treated with dignity is as healing as the meal itself.

Our volunteers often walk away humbled, saying that they feel they received more than they gave. In the faces of the hungry, they saw the face of Christ. In the act of serving, they themselves were fed spiritually.

“When we feed others, we ourselves are fed.”

Matthew’s Hope reminds us that the church is not confined to four walls on a Sunday morning. It is alive wherever love is given, wherever compassion is practiced, wherever Christ is made known in the breaking of bread.

# December 2025

## 🚝 Holiday Monorail Crawl

Friday, December 5, 6:30–9:30 PM (Optional Dinner at 5:00 PM)

On Friday, December 5, the tradition continues—our annual Holiday Monorail Crawl. We’ll meet at Disney’s Polynesian Resort at 6:15 PM, and from there, we’ll hop aboard the monorail for an evening filled with lights, laughter, and Christmas wonder.

At each stop—The Grand Floridian, The Contemporary, The Wilderness Lodge—there will be decorations to marvel at, holiday treats to sample, and plenty of time for fellowship. For many, this event has become the start of their Christmas season, a night that combines the joy of community with the magic of the holidays.

There’s something deeply meaningful about traveling together from place to place, pausing to admire the beauty and creativity of the season. The sparkle of lights and the sound of laughter remind us that Christmas is not just about gifts under a tree, but about the gift of being together.

The evening will end with fireworks and the famous water parade—a reminder that joy comes in many forms, from the grand displays to the simple act of being surrounded by people who care.

“The sparkle of the season shines brightest in the company of friends.”

## 🎁 Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, December 6, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM

On December 6, the church grounds will be transformed into a festive marketplace. Booths will overflow with handmade crafts, baked goods, and treasures waiting to be discovered. The Holiday Bazaar is more than an event—it’s a celebration of creativity, community, and generosity.

Shoppers will come looking for Christmas gifts, but they’ll find something even more valuable: connection. Neighbors catching up, children laughing as they wander among the tables, volunteers serving with joy. Every purchase will help support the mission and ministry of Windermere Union Church, making the bazaar both fun and purposeful.

The heart of the bazaar is not commerce—it is community. It’s the way people gather, share their talents, and support one another. It’s a reminder that even in the busiest season of the year, we can pause to be present with each other, to celebrate what is good and meaningful.

“The heart of the bazaar is not commerce—it is community.”

## 👶 Children’s Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 14 during Morning Worship

Every December, as the days grow shorter and the air turns cooler, our hearts turn toward Bethlehem. On December 14, during morning worship, our children will take center stage to share the Christmas story in their own words and songs.

The costumes may be simple—bathrobes for shepherds, tinsel halos for angels—but the impact is profound. With each line spoken and each carol sung, we are reminded of the miracle of that holy night long ago: a child born in a manger, bringing hope and joy to the world.

Parents and grandparents will beam with pride, cameras at the ready. The congregation will laugh at the occasional missed cue, and perhaps shed a tear when the children sing of peace and goodwill. What makes the pageant so powerful is not perfection, but honesty. The children remind us that Christmas is not about flawless production, but about the wonder and innocence of God’s love made flesh.

By the end of the service, the congregation will be filled with a sense of joy and renewal. For in the voices of our children, we hear again the angel’s message: “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy for all people.”

“The beauty of the pageant is not in perfection, but in the wonder of God’s love made flesh.”

**Closing Blessing**

As we close this season’s newsletter, may we be reminded that we are not just readers of events, but participants in God’s unfolding story. Every act of service, every shared meal, every song, every laugh, every prayer—it all becomes part of the tapestry of love that is Windermere Union Church.

May you go forth carrying the joy of fellowship, the strength of community, and the peace of Christ in your heart. And may this season bring you renewed hope, deeper faith, and the assurance that you are loved, valued, and never alone.

With God’s blessing,
Pastor Brad