

Grand AveNews

March 2024

“An Empty Grave is there to prove my savior lives!”

*Why do you look for the living among the dead?
He is not here; he has risen! (Luke 24:5-6)*

On my first trip to the Holy Land, our tour ended appropriately at the Garden Tomb where, tradition says, the body of Jesus was laid after his crucifixion. Because the entrance to the tomb is quite small, only one person at a time may enter. When my turn came, a fellow pilgrim exiting the tomb remarked "There's not much to see."

I pondered the irony of it all. We had traveled half way around the world essentially to see a small cave filled with nothing. The emptiness of the tomb, however, points toward the true fullness that Christ died to give us. Our faith is founded on and supported by an empty tomb that gives us fullness of life forevermore.

I've often reflected on that brief encounter. Jesus was alive then, and he is alive today. That is why he left behind "just an empty tomb." Jesus had no need of it. Moreover, his promise to us is that on our glorious resurrection day, we too will leave behind just an empty tomb.

In celebration of that reality and in anticipation of that day, I invite you to join me in a glorious time of worship this Easter Sunday. Come ... and bring a friend!

Pastor David

Lenten Luncheon and Worship – “The Fruit of the Spirit is...”

Once again this year, Grand Avenue UMC is joining several area congregations for a time of worship and a light luncheon each Monday during Lent. Our worship this season will focus on “The Fruits of the Spirit,” a different fruit of the Spirit each week. Worship will begin each Monday at 12:10 pm with music being provided by the host church and a homily being delivered by one of the other pastors. A light lunch of soup, salad, and/or sandwiches will be served at 12:35. There is no charge for the luncheon, but donations will be taken to support “Project Hope” which helps each of our congregations feed the hungry in our community all through the year. You are invited to join us for any or all of the following times of faith and fellowship:

March 4 @ St. Luke’s Episcopal Church — Leslie Roper will preach on “Gentleness”

March 11 @ First Presbyterian Church — J. J. Galloway will preach on “Joy”

March 18 @ Oaklawn UMC— David Fleming will preach on “Peace”

March 25 @ Grand Avenue UMC — Chip Hatcher will preach on “Patience”

As we plan to host during Holy Week, Jane Oliver is coordinating our efforts in the kitchen. We will serve creamy tomato basil soup with chips and a variety of sandwiches. We need people who will provide sandwiches as well as others who will set and decorate tables, serve soup and drinks, and clean up after the meal. If you are available to help, you may sign up after worship on Sunday or call the church office at 501-623-5626.

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Building Faith,
Bringing Hope,
Reaching Out in
love
Grand Avenue
United Methodist Church
Hot Springs, AR
501-623-5626

GAUMC Welcomes Cindy Rainwater

We are delighted to welcome Cindy Rainwater as our newest member. Cindy was born in Malvern and graduated from Magnet Cove High School. She then attended Ouachita Baptist University for a couple of years. She eventually began working for Union Carbide as the secretary for the general manager. While there, she met her husband and got married. They moved to Ft. Smith where they lived for 25 years.

Cindy made the decision to go back to college and received a nursing degree. For 10 years she used her nursing skills as a traveling immunization nurse for the Arkansas Department of Health. She then was employed by the University of Arkansas Ft. Smith as the office manager of their foundation and finally retired at age 55. She and her husband enjoyed traveling and taking road trips. Sadly, her husband died in 2018. Cindy decided to move back to Hot Springs closer to her daughter who lives in Bryant. She also has two granddaughters (both teachers) and one grandson who is a student at Bryant.



Cindy's hobbies include working with stained glass and mosaics, reading, hanging out with her three best friends, and spending quality time with Archie, her adopted dog.

Since moving back to the Hot Springs area, Cindy visited several churches looking for a place to belong. She reconnected with Jim Morrissey, who invited her to attend Grand Avenue where she found a friendly, welcoming congregation. Welcome, Cindy! We are so glad you have joined us!

Spotlight on Kathy Mesko

Grand Avenue is fortunate to have talented musicians, and one of those is Kathy Mesko. Not only does Kathy sing in the choir and play handbells, but she is now the pianist for our 8:30 service on Sundays. Kathy's love for music began with encouragement from her grandmother, who was the pianist for the Methodist Church in Quitman, Arkansas.

(Continued on page 3)

Easter Lily Order Form

Help us to beautify our sanctuary for Easter by placing a lily in honor or memory of a loved one.

The cost of each plant is \$15.00. Make checks payable to Grand Avenue UMC. Please place your order by March 20.

_____ In honor of _____

_____ In memory of _____

Given by: _____

_____ Cash _____ Check _____ Amt. Paid



Holy Week Tenebrae Service

As we approach Easter at the end of March, we anticipate all the special services that Grand Avenue offers to celebrate and remember our Lord. Palm Sunday and Easter morning are highlights of our Christian year, and we indeed celebrate these with great joy. Yet these high emotional days are also linked with a week of betrayal, denial, pain, separation, and death.

On Thursday, March 28, at 6:30 pm, the Chancel Choir and other participants will help lead the congregation in a beautiful, symbolic service known as Tenebrae. The word “Tenebrae” is Latin and means darkness. On this night we will remember the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples and his subsequent suffering and death on the cross. The service is simple and intimate as we search our own hearts in hearing Christ’s request to “Stay with Me.” The service will be enriched with Lowella Cherry on piano and our guest musician, Marque Hauptert, on cello.

We hope you will make plans to attend this special service.

Kathy White

Kathy Mesko *(continued from page 2)*

Kathy was born in Eldorado, but grew up in Little Rock. She began piano lessons at age eight. One huge influence on her music was working at Moses Music Store while in high school. While there, she had access to sheet music of every genre. Kathy graduated from Parkview High School and attended the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville where she met Allan Mesko. They married after Kathy’s sophomore year. Kathy has three children, all who are musical. When her children began school, Kathy began teaching piano, and she enrolled in several music classes at UALR. The family moved several times and eventually they settled in Hot Springs. In 2004 they joined Grand Avenue UMC. Through the years Kathy has played for Lakeside Choir, Lake Hamilton choir, Hot Springs Music Club, and Allan’s choirs. She also has served as the pianist for Hope Church.

We are delighted to have Kathy back at GAUMC. She states that she feels as if she has come home and is incredibly blessed to be back with the people of Grand Avenue.



Kathy Mesko



Palm Sunday

With glory and with majesty,
with palm leaves and with shouts,
the humble King was welcomed home.
But hopes soon turned to doubts.

The steadfastness of God opposed
the fickleness of man.
“Hosannas” turned to “Crucify,”
but nothing stopped God’s plan.

The drama of this week would end
with temple curtain torn.
The laws of old would pass away—
the law of Love was born.

Steve Jennings



Memorials & Honorariums Received



In memory of ...

Cara Bolding by Kay Furo

Opal Scott by Betty & Don Jones and
Autumn

Mary Ann McGowan by David Fleming
& Karla Hefty

Mary Ann McGowan by Jill & Steve Merritt

Cara Bolding by Patricia & Bob Heusel

Mary Ann McGowan by Candis & John Oliver

Mary Ann McGowan by Rebecca & Michael
Pertl

Rachel Stolz by Mary Tom Taylor

Jo Ann Bradshaw by Mary Tom Taylor

In honor of ...

Jim Morrissey by Beth & Phil Tripp



The Trustees hired Robert-McNutt Roofing to replace the Duro-Last roofing on the Sanctuary and to seal the flashing. The project was completed on February 21.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is a global nonprofit housing organization working in local communities across all 50 states in the United States and in more than 70 countries around the world. Habitat for Humanity works to help build and improve homes for families of low-income or disadvantaged backgrounds. Habitat's vision is of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Homes are built using volunteer labor, including that of Habitat homeowners through the practice of sweat equity. Habitat makes no profit from the sales.

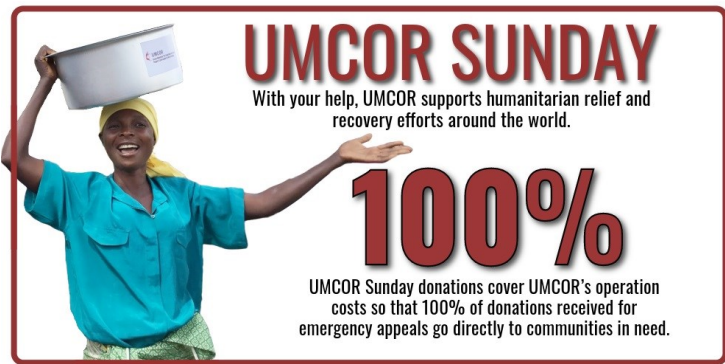
GAUMC has included the Hot Springs Habitat for Humanity organization for many years as one of our mission outreach programs. Chairman Morris Coston and his right-hand man Chuck Clark visit a Habitat building site once a month to bring snacks to the workers and enjoy 30 minutes fellowship. When the home is completed, GAUMC attends the dedication ceremony and presents the new homeowner with a \$200 gift card to Lowe's Home Center.



Morris Coston and Chuck Clark "Reaching out in Love" by serving Habitat for Humanity team members.

**Outreach is collecting oatmeal & cereal
during the month of March.**

UMCOR Sunday



UMCOR Sunday (previously One Great Hour of Sharing) is one of six special offerings in The United Methodist Church that supports ministries shared by all churches in the denomination. UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, acts on our behalf when there is a crisis. UMCOR's 80-year history is grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ, "created to do good things" (Ephesians 2:10) that alleviate human suffering. Responding to people suffering from the effects of war,

civil unrest, hurricanes, wildfires, famines or floods, UMCOR steps in on your behalf in times of crisis to help individuals, families and communities too overwhelmed to recover on their own.

When we give to specific UMCOR projects, 100% of our gifts are directed to the designated response. UMCOR equips local churches, annual conferences and nonprofit organizations to be in mission with their communities, to respond to those left most vulnerable during challenging times. And UMCOR doesn't just respond to the emergency for the short term. Working with local organizations, churches in the community and United Methodist volunteers, UMCOR cultivates relationships and helps communities rebuild, often for years after the disaster. UMCOR can do this because the funds we receive join with those of millions of United Methodists to help cover the costs of doing business. From training volunteers to keeping the office lights on, the UMCOR Sunday special offering equips the organization to respond quickly when disaster strikes.

Dear Grand Avenue United Methodist Church,

On behalf of Camp Tanako, we would like to thank you for your recent donation of \$500.00. Your contribution will enable us to host summer programming with both overnight and day camp. Since we were founded in 1948, Camp Tanako has been a place for children, youth, and adults to experience Christ in nature.

Tanako depends on donations to keep summer camp affordable for our families. Your gift is truly appreciated. Not only do we run an excellent summer program, but we are open year-round for retreats and conferences. We ask you to join us in prayer for our program's success and are grateful for you and your example of Christ's love and generosity. Together our work builds the disciples of tomorrow.

In His Service,
Kayla Hardage
Executive Director

Dear Rev. David & Prayer Shawl Ministry,

Thank you so much for thinking of me while I recover from clavicle surgery, seven broken ribs and a broken sternum as a result of a car accident. This recovery is slow and painful but your beautiful teal shawl with the cross and tassels wraps me in your love and the healing happens. Thank you so much!

I enjoyed visiting with Rev. David and look forward to being in church with all of you very soon. May God richly bless each stitch you make as you continue to minister to others with broken bodies, broken hearts & broken minds.

I appreciate you and cherish your love and prayers.

Valerie Jackson



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We're Here to Serve You

Senior Pastor - Rev. David M. Fleming
Chancel Choir Director - Kathie White
Administrative Assistant - Chris Headley
Grand AveNews Editor - Linda Stanley

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Phone: (501) 623-5626

Fax: (501) 623-3526

**E-mail: grand.avenue@sbcglobal.net
www.gaumch.org**



Holy Week at Grand Avenue

Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024

**In-person Worship at 8:30 and 10:45 am
Online Worship on Facebook and YouTube**

Thursday, March 28, 2024

**Grand Avenue's Music Ministry presents a Tenebrae Service at 6:30 pm,
including the Lord's Supper and the remembrance
of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross**

Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024

**In-person Worship at 8:30 and 10:45 am
Online Worship on Facebook and YouTube**