



MARCH/  
APRIL 2023

# The Flame

## A Word from Our Pastor

Malcolm Guite's, "A Sonnet for Easter Dawn" includes the following lines:

She turns, but cannot focus through her tears,  
Or recognize the Gardener standing there.  
She hardly hears his gentle question 'Why,  
Why are you weeping?', or sees the play of light  
That brightens as she chokes out her reply  
'They took my love away, my day is night'  
And then she hears her name, she hears Love say  
The Word that turns her night, and ours, to Day.



Happy Easter, dear friends. The sweet, good news of Christ's resurrection comes to us once more as we celebrate what only God could do. In his death, Christ takes on our sin and shame, our sickness and death, our fear and defeat, our agony and failures. In the cross, all of the ugliness of humanity, including our own stories of loss and pain, are nailed to Jesus. "It is finished," says Christ. And in one great surprise, Mary and the women find the tomb empty. Where is Jesus? Where have they taken him? Some moments of defeat are so poignant, so permanent, we cannot imagine any way forward. Jesus' clever question of Mary might be asked of any of us, "Why are you weeping?" Why are you weeping? I imagine on any given day we could respond to that question in countless ways. Why are you weeping? Concerns for my children and their future. Difficult health diagnoses and treatment. Strained if not broken relationships. Economic anxiety and financial hardship. Why are you weeping? For countless reasons. Guite says it so well, "She hears Love say the Word that turns her night, and ours, to Day." This is the hope of Easter. With only a word, we learn again that Christ is alive. All is not lost. Jesus is resurrected. Our night has turned to day. Even our losses have been turned to victories. I look forward to worshipping with you on Easter Sunday, April 9! 8am or 11am in the Sanctuary including FUMC Handbells and guest instrumentalists. The 9am service in the Worship Center will include Easter classics and fellowship with members and guests. See you on Easter Sunday! Bring a friend!

Thank you for your support and involvement in FUMC's Lenten ministries and efforts. Beginning with Ash Wednesday, it has been a reflective season of preparation as we anticipate our Easter celebrations. We are thrilled to again join in "Soup & Sermon" with other local UMC's on Thursdays. It has been a treat to worship and fellowship together. I've received excellent feedback from individuals and classes that have used Tom Berlin's *Restored: Finding Redemption in Our Mess* study that accompanied our sermon series. We are looking forward to an excellent Holy Week including Palm Sunday (April 2), Maundy Thursday services at Noon & 6pm (April 6), and Good Friday services at Noon & 6pm (April 7). See you there!

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With respect to the administrative work of the church, I offer you a few updates. With the addition of Mary Hickox as Youth Director in January, the Staff Parish Relations Committee has been working to update the Staff Organization Chart, Job Descriptions, and Personnel Policies. It has been a strong start to 2023 with church finances. Through February, total giving for the year is at \$293,908 vs. \$231,024 to this point in 2022. We have already paid \$218,753 toward the Next 100 Years Campaign & Debt, much of which was given in the final days of '22. Our cash balances remain strong including special accounts for Memorials, Youth, Witt House, etc. Thank you for your giving to FUMC in support of its ministries. Keep up the great work!

With respect to the Trustees and their work, there are a number of updates. First and foremost, we are so pleased the first floor office suite renovation has begun. Last Spring's Debt Reduction "Next 100 Years Campaign" included the primary goal of paying down our construction debt by 2026 and tackling a few other needed projects. This office suite is fairly simple in that it does not require major construction. The plans include installing and rearranging interior walls, new carpet, ceiling, lighting, doors, windows, minor electrical, and data access. These new offices will make staff more efficient and allow for easier collaboration. The quote for this project is \$200k and FUMC has the money on hand. The project is expected to take 2-3 months to complete. Other foci of the Trustees include purchasing and installing a defibrillator at the Witt House, developing safety standards for the church and its ministries, continuing to remedy water issues in the basement of the Sanctuary, and researching the best possible future of the old parsonage property at 320 W. Main. More information will be forthcoming.

As I write this newsletter column, my family is expecting our third child at any moment. The baby may have arrived by the time you read this! Please pray for an uneventful delivery and a smooth first few weeks for our now family of five. I plan on a greatly reduced work schedule for five or six weeks following the baby's birth. I will preach on Easter Sunday (April 9) and will continue to keep up with email and various projects through the staff. Otherwise, Rev. Chase will assume most pastoral responsibilities. I encourage you to contact him as needed.

Again, I wish you a Happy Easter as we celebrate this change of season. Signs of new life are all around us. Nature pours forth praise with green leaves and flowers aplenty. Our church shares signs of new life including facility renovations, new members, confirmation class, and ongoing ministries. The work of the Resurrection continues around us and within us. Christ is Risen! Amen!

Grace & Peace,

Rev. Dane Womack, Senior Pastor

## NEW MEMBER



Our newest member, Susan Coy, joined the church during the 8am service on Sunday, March 19. She has attended Bible studies here for well over a decade and decided it was finally time to officially become a member.

She is already an active member of a Bible study, participates in the prayer ministry, helps with the Wednesday night meal, and has helped in the Witt House.

"It feels like home to me," she said of the church. "It's welcoming."

Susan is married to Tim; they have sons Sumner and Mason, and a granddaughter, Miller.

Susan enjoys gardening and walking her dog.

Bach is coming to Paragould Arkansas, Monday, June 19th, @ 6:30 pm via the BACH-MOBILE!

Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier is a collection of solo keyboard music by Johann Sebastian Bach. The collection includes preludes and fugues which are regarded as the most influential works which ultimately revolutionized western classical music!

Along with working on the repertoire, Louis Menendez has constructed the BACH-MOBILE - a DIY Horse Trailer to Camper conversion for a traveling Pianist. Mendez's first tour will be focused on The Well-Tempered Clavier of J.S. Bach. Menendez's goal is to play every prelude and fugue in every state!

We are excited to host this event at Paragould FUMC! Come join us in welcoming Louis Menendez, The BACH-MOBILE, The Bach in the Woods Project, and the gift of music.

Cost: Donations only! 25% of the donation will be given to the church's music department. (a donation box will be available). Following the concert, join Menendez for coffee and peek at the BACH-MOBILE.



A really beautiful ministry happens every month that we'd bet not too many people even know about. A group of ladies from the church go to Focus, Inc., a center for people with developmental delays, to celebrate the month's birthdays with the people who go there. One buys the juice, another picks up cupcakes. They come in the building, waving to the people there on the way, stopping to give a hug or two. They put cupcakes and ice cream cups on plates, and then go out to sing happy birthday and hand a card to people who have birthdays that month. After that, the ladies dole out apple juice and give everyone a napkin. So simple. The women then sit with the people who attend, check up on past conversations, and give more hugs. They make a really big deal out of birthdays, and the people who get a card signed by the ladies sometimes get emotional.

"Many years ago now a group of ladies from FUMC started coming to Focus once a month to celebrate that month's birthdays," said Glenda McEuen, former Focus, Inc. director. "We affectionately started calling them the 'church ladies' and 'birthday ladies'. The participants quickly started looking forward to their visits, after all, they all love cake and ice cream. But even more so, they enjoyed the time with the ladies after the treats were served when the ladies stayed and visited with the participants. We all like to feel special and the ladies do that for our participants when they stay and visit. They have shown a love for our special population in their years of doing this."

It started in 2012 when Focus, Inc. was given a grant through the church's Dollar Per Week program. Ladies from the church saw what the organization was and wanted a way to connect with the people there. From that desire, the birthday party ministry was born. Every month since (with the exception of a time for Covid restrictions), all of the women who can meet in the facilities' kitchen to get things ready. They know the 40+ people there by name and know even the relatives of the people there, their hobbies, and the sport they participate in for Special Olympics. The women have gotten to know and love the people that attend Focus and plan to continue to serve them in this way.

"We have been for the past nine years at least coming to celebrate the birthdays," said Susie Cook, organizer. "We're mostly here just to visit with the participants who are here and we have made some wonderful friends in the past nine years. It's been very rewarding for us. When we walk in the people are excited to see us. It's a really, really good feeling. We enjoy doing it very much."

The ladies who do the birthday ministry each month include Gloria Bridges, Susie Cook, Rose Gramling, Guyla Jackson, Rena Jackson, Mary Justice, Karoline Risker, Lissa Tabor, Charlotte Thompson, and Janice Wilcox. Anyone is welcome to attend this special event.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: CHARLOTTE THOMPSON, RENA JACKSON, LISSA TABOR, GLORIA BRIDGES, JANICE WILCOX, ROSE GRAMLING, SUSIE COOK, AND KAROLINE RISKER. NOT PICTURED: MARY JUSTICE, GUYLA JACKSON

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Mary Justice

Mary's calm demeanor, kind ways, and the fact that she just sees and loves everybody might make her the perfect person to head up a ministry like the Witt House food pantry, a job she had done since the pantry started in 2011. Mary was a member of the Friends of Faith circle and that group proposed that the Witt House become a food pantry because, in her words, "It's important for people to get fed." Mary and Guyla Jackson were handed the reigns when then-Associate Pastor Angie Gage, who helped start the Witt House, left to pastor a church. Now she works every Tuesday in the morning and then again from 3:30-6pm. She doesn't have to come on Fridays as Guyla is in charge that day, but she adds that she comes a lot, anyway, because she "can't stand not to know what's going on." She heads up about 15 volunteers each Tuesday late afternoon as the cars line the parking lot.

Mary is also active in helping with the acolytes for the 11:00 am service, a job Mary calls a joy. "I'm so proud when I see them walking down the aisle." Mary works with Linda Futrell in getting the acolytes trained, dressed, and ready to go. "I love to see Linda in teacher mode," she joked.

Mary is also active as a Sunday School teacher; she teaches the Homemakers class. In addition, she helps cook the Wednesday night meal, is a member of the prayer ministry, and the Focus birthday party ministry.

Mary has been a member of FUMC since 2007 when she moved from Lancaster, California, to help her sister, Jane, who she ended up moving next door to. It was natural for her to come back; Mary was born in Paragould and both of her parents were raised in the town. "I always felt like this was home," she said. Before she retired, Mary was a teacher, mainly 5th grade, but also taught 3rd and 4th grades.

Her favorite thing about FUMC is the people. "They've been very kind to me," she said.

Mary has a nephew, Andy Giguere, and a grand niece, Andy's daughter, Sara, a student Global Outreach Development in Nashville, TN. We are so thankful to have Mary!



## WITT HOUSE NEEDS

On behalf of the Witt House Volunteer team, as well as the people we serve, we want to express our sincere appreciation for the donation of hygiene products during our February mission project. As the need continues to grow due to the increase of clients being served each week, we are adding hygiene products to our ongoing needs list. Thank you for your generosity and support of this ministry.

### Food items needed:

- Pinto Beans
- Canned Chicken
- Canned Tuna
- Ravioli
- Canned Chili
- Peanut Butter

### Hygiene items needed:

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Deodorant
- Bar Soap
- Toothpaste
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Hotel/Motel Toiletries

## Calling all Gardeners

The Mission Team wants to plant the following seed with our gardeners so that the Witt House can receive your excess produce this summer. To get you growing, here are some spring gardening tips:

### When To Plant

The Greene County Agri Extension Service recommends waiting until April 15th to plant; you still might have to cover your plants if we have a late frost.

### What To Plant

Cucumbers, Sweet Potatoes, Squash, Melons, Okra, Peppers, Eggplant, Sweet Corn, Tomatoes, Beans, Broccoli, and your flowering bedding plants.

### What To Do

Keep your hoe sharp! Don't allow weeds to get an early start in your garden, prepare your gardens by applying two inches plus of compost, have your soil tested by the Greene County Extension office.

Happy Growing, and Giving!

Contributions to the Witt House can be dropped off in the Narthex or Welcome Center.

# CHILDREN & Youth Ministries

Hello FUMC Friends!

Spring has definitely sprung! You can see and feel it everywhere you go. It's hard to believe that the end of the school year is just a couple of months away. In my house, we are busy preparing for Owen to graduate high school. Many plans, deadlines, and preparations are going into that. I am so thankful for those in the church that have played a part in his upbringing. He and the other seniors are just another example of how children's ministry and those involved with it are such an important part of the church. I encourage you if you have never participated in children's ministry to give it a try. You never know what gifts you may have to share in this area! Contact me for more information!

Blessings!

Angela, Director of Children's Ministries



## Mark Your Calendars:

March 29- May 17 Connect  
Wednesdays continue. It's not too late to join us!

April 2 PreK-6th will be waving palms and singing at our 9:00 and 11:00 am services

April 8 Easter Egg Hunt for grades PreK-6 at 9:00am

June 11-15 VBS "Hero Hotline" for children entering PreK-6th grades

June 26-30 Ready, Set, READ! For children entering PreK-6th grades



## UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

April 11 at 6:45am Senior High Breakfast at Iron Horse BBQ

April 23 from 1-7pm Serve Sunday/Larry's Pizza

April 29 at 5pm Senior Sunday Rehearsal

April 30 Senior Sunday; send off at 5pm

May 9 at 6:45am Senior High Breakfast at Iron Horse BBQ

May 21 at 5pm End of School Year Celebration

June 2-3 NE District Youth Camp

Several of our students were able to go to Veritas this year in March. Veritas is the largest event of the ACCYM year with over 1,500 youth and adults in attendance. The event was hosted at the Embassy Suites Northwest Arkansas Hotel, Spa & Convention Center in Rogers, AR.

The event concentrated on offering an incredible worship experience with a great speaker, Rev. J.J. Whitney, a worship band, Church of the Resurrection's Worship Collective, and communion with our Bishop. Between worship

sessions, we shared in opportunities to connect in community with others through the Ministry Mart, where our youth packed care supplies and even brought home a tub to share with our Witt House. We also met with our district's youth collective where we planned our first retreat at Mount Eagle for June 2nd & 3rd.

The next connexional events are the district retreat in June and Assembly in July; both registrations are open on our church center app.



# Galentines Event

Ladies of the church were treated to a women's event on Feb. 11 that started with chair yoga (thank you, Lesley!), a talk by Rev. Sarah Ellzey, pastor of Trumann and Lepanto UMC's, a light lunch, and a cookie exchange. Thank you to Lesley Hobbs and Jill Womack for planning and executing the event.

The next women's event is a tea on Saturday, May 13 at 11:00 am. All are invited to attend.



First United Methodist Church of Paragould is pleased to announce grant recipients for the church's Dollar Per Week program. The church had \$7,378 to distribute, gathered from the single \$1 bills in the offering plate from the previous year. The program has given out \$92,227 since it began in 2011.

The funds were distributed as follows: \$500 to the Greene County Historical Society (for printing books, photos, quarterlies and newsletters), \$1,000 to Sound Expression Music (providing needed equipment and instrument replacements), \$500 to Arkansas Methodist Medical Center (to cover the costs of lab work at community health fairs), \$1,000 to Together We Foster (to purchase reunification baskets that includes family games/activities, family devotional, a card of encouragement, and a small gift card), \$600 to Focus, Inc. (for a library for the participants at Focus), \$750 to Mid-South Health Systems (for transportation to and from services and money for medications for clients), \$750 to the Greene County Parent Center (for various programs that benefit its students), and \$2,278 to the Witt House Food Pantry.

Recipients were chosen by a grant committee who reviewed submissions received earlier in the year.

## Upcoming Events APRIL-MAY

### Senior Sunday

As the end of the school year approaches, it calls for a time to celebrate our Senior Class of 2023 Youth at Paragould FUMC. Students will lead all services on Sunday, April 30th. Please make plans to attend and congratulate these students on all their accomplishments over the years and for being faithful members of the Paragould FUMC family.

Important dates to remember for Senior Sunday deadlines: April 15th for Senior Spotlights to be used in social media, and April 24th for Video/Bulletin for use in the Senior Sunday service. The first Senior planning meeting is April 2nd at 3:00pm in the 2nd floor Youth Room. Future meeting dates will be discussed at that time. Rehearsal for Senior



Sunday Services will be on April 29th at 5:00pm.

Information can be emailed to either [mary.hickox@fumcparagould.org](mailto:mary.hickox@fumcparagould.org) or [karoline.riskier@fumcparagould.org](mailto:karoline.riskier@fumcparagould.org) by the deadlines.

Let us all continue to pray for our Senior students as they conclude their journey in high school and transition to a new phase of life.

## HOLY WEEK Schedule

April 6 Maundy Thursday services at noon & 6pm, Sanctuary (6pm service will be streamed)

April 7 Good Friday services at noon & 6pm, Sanctuary (6pm service will be streamed)

April 8 Holy Saturday children's egg hunt and brunch beginning at 9am in the gym

April 9 Easter Sunday Services at 8am (Sanctuary), 9am (Worship Center) & 11am (Sanctuary)

## June Save the Dates

Northeast District Youth Camp **June 2-3**

Vacation Bible School **June 11-15**

Bach Mobile **June 19**

Ready, Set, READ **June 26-30**

*One Service Sunday*

**One Service at 10am - 2023**

May 28 - Sanctuary  
July 2 - Worship Center  
Sept. 3 - Sanctuary  
Dec. 31 - Worship Center

\*No Youth/Children Sunday School  
\*Adult Sunday School meet at their discretion

*Worship together with us!*

SAVE THE DATE!

*Ladies Tea Party*

**Saturday, May 13**  
11:00 am

Hosted by the Women's Ministry of FUMC Paragould

# Jubilation Jazz



On March 4, we welcomed Jubilation Jazz, a group of retired band directors, retired military musicians, and other professional musicians who donate their time, travel expenses and musical abilities to share God's message in an entertaining Big Band Jazz format. They performed for over an hour at this free event. We anticipate inviting them to come again.

## Young at Heart Upcoming Events

April 10 Movie: "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel"

April 20 Outing: Going to Sikeston to Lambert's Cafe, home of the throwed rolls! Leaving the church at 9am.

April 24 Game night at 5:30pm

May 24 Memphis Redbirds Game; leave at 10:00am; game starts at 12:05pm. Cost is \$45. Sign up on the church center app or contact the church office.

Movies and game night are free. All other activities are dutch treat.

## Wedding Shower

You Are Invited to a Wedding Shower for Maggie Schreit, bride-elect of Jonah Treece Saturday, April 29, from 10-11:30am in the Welcome Center Maggie is registered at Perfect Touch and Target

## Wedding

You Are Invited to the Wedding of Kyleigh Horner and Zac Hoggard Saturday, May 6 at 5:30pm First United Methodist Church Paragould Sanctuary

## Baby Shower

You Are Invited to a Baby Shower for Alexis Dearing and baby girl Sunday, May 21, at 4pm Alexis is registered at babylist.com and Cutie Patootie

# Financial Report

## MARCH-APRIL

General Contributions:

January: \$82,716

February: \$60,760

Building/100 Year Contributions:

January: \$73,454

February \$51,816

A Dollar A Week total to date: \$1,270

Building Loan Principal Balance: \$2,779,836

### In Memory of:

**David Barnett** by Janice Wilcox and Family, Kay & Herb Bland

**O'Neal Hicks** by Bob Branch

**Helen Hawkins** by John & Ann Honeycutt, Larry & Denise Chipman, Robin Patten, Charles & Donna Brazil, Linda Futrell, Kay & Herb Bland, and Janice Wilcox, David, Carla, Farrah, & Curtis

**Margie Davidson** by Kay & Herb Bland, Janice Wilcox

**Mary Ann Stallcup** by Jeff & Kerry Combs, Charles & Donna Brazil, Bob Branch, Kay & Herb Bland, Larry & Denise Chipman, John & Carrie Cook, Robin Patten, Sally Martin, Brenda Anderson, John & Ann Honeycutt, Tina Vangilder, Karl & Phyllis Hamblen, Rena & Davey Joe Jackson, Wesley Sunday School Class, Mike & Tracy Finch, Diane Blossom, Nancy Vangilder, Beth Pace, Melvin & Sandra Wamock, Ann Gregg, Donis & Bonnie Hamilton, Janice Wilcox, Gary & Beverly Biggs, Tim & Lani Mangrum, Martha Morgan, Gloria Bridges

**Virginia Weeks** by Charles & Donna Brazil, Bob Branch, Mary Ann Allen

**Wilma Wheelis** by Dow & Amy Brantley

**Laurie Carter** by Jeff & Kerry Combs

**Travis Carter** by Jeff & Kerry Combs

**Mike Patten** by Woodie Sue & Bud Herlein, Mary Ann Allen

**Roberta Parkinson** by Woodie Sue & Bud Herlein

**Mack Hamblen** by Bob Branch, Kay & Herb Bland, Robin Patten, Larry & Denise Chipman

**Betty Fletcher** by Tina Vangilder

**Bob Resler** by Kay Beauchamp, Gloria Bridges

**Scarlett Jarman** by Mary Ann Allen

**Carolyn Duke** by Paragould High School Class of 1968

**Hildred Gilmore** by Kay & Herb Bland

**Jean Smith** by Robin Patten, Kay & Herb Bland

**Ann Black** by Jane Pigue

### In Honor of:

**Bill Phillips** on his birthday by Bill Fisher



LOVE GOD. SERVE PEOPLE. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

*Church Office*

8:30AM-4:30PM MON-THURS  
8:30AM-NOON FRIDAY

*Witt House  
Food Pantry*

4:30PM-6PM TUESDAY  
9:30AM-11:00AM FRIDAY

**Bishop** Laura Merrill  
**Co-District Superintendents** Rodney Steele, Phil Hathcock  
**Pastors** Dane Womack (william.womack@arumc.org,  
Chase Burns (chase.burns@arumc.org)  
**Music Director** Brian Pearson (eaglebandguy2@gmail.com)  
**Director of Youth Ministries**  
Mary Hickox (mary.hickox@fumcparagould.org)  
**Director of Children's Ministries**  
Angela Newby  
(angela.newby@fumcparagould.org)  
**Dir. of Media/Communications** Karoline Risker  
(karoline.risker@fumcparagould.org)  
**Organist** Bernard Raley  
**Church Administrator** Denise Chipman  
(denise.chipman@fumcparagould.org)  
**Custodian:** Mike Rutherford



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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