

Love God. Serve People. Make a Difference.

First United Methodist Church

The Flame

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A word from our pastor

Rev. Dane Womack



Rev. Womack | April Monthly Newsletter

Friends and Families of Paragould FUMC, Happy Holy Week! Like me, I know you are disappointed we are not together in-person, but I trust you are meeting God's presence in new and moving ways this week as we prepare for Easter.

You should be receiving this letter on Good Friday. The appointed Psalm for today is **Psalm 22** which you will surely recognize: **My God, my God, why have you forsaken**

me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.

Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

Jesus cries forth in the words of Psalm 22 as he draws his last breath. It is a difficult scene as Jesus Christ, son of God, dies a criminal's death. In this moment, Jesus experiences the full thrust of the worst human experience. Jesus feels forsaken, lost, and forgotten as he dies alone. Who among us has not experienced similar moments? Not death on a cross, but tragic losses and life-shattering disappointments. You've received news that cut to your core. Here God in Jesus joins us in the laments we have cried, and perhaps will cry again, on our worst days. Though, we note that Psalm 22 is more than lament. It is also a prayer of confidence and hope. Psalm 22 recollects God's faithfulness to generations past. Jesus shares both a sense of loss and a confidence in God's salvation. Momentary experiences of devastation do not last. Scars remain, but wounds can be healed. I am finding hope in Psalm 22 on this Good Friday. We are in the midst of our own moment of loss and confusion. For some, it is a time of deep lament. "Yet," as the Psalmist says, "You are holy... In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried, and were saved." Today we pray those words alongside Jesus on the cross, echoing generations of faithful brothers and sisters, and with friends across the state,

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ONLINE GIVING

A new way to give

We now have new options for giving to the church! If you would like to give online, head over to www.fumcparagould.org, then go to the giving tab. There will be a link at the bottom for online giving. Click on the link and that will take you through a quick process where you will set up your bank account or credit/debit card information. You can make a one-time donation or set up recurring giving. You can also text to give. You can text any amount to 84321. Standard message and data rates may apply. There is a short informational video about it on the giving page of the site. Please let us know if you have any questions. It's easy to use!

nation, and world.

Thanks to everyone who joined in our Palm Parade last Sunday. What a wonderful time! I could say more, but instead I share a few words from someone outside our congregation:

"I wanted to tell you that your church really blessed us yesterday morning. A parade of cars came driving by, with all their people waving palm branches. I got so emotional that I started crying. It just meant so much to me. They were all smiling and shouting out Hosanna as they drove by. It was such a sweet thing to do for our neighborhood. Please pass it along that they blessed us tremendously at a time when we were really missing being in church. I wish they could have driven down every street in Paragould!"

Though we are not in church, God's Spirit is still moving among us! Amen! After the Palm Parade, our Youth have gathered for "Youth Group Online" via ZOOM. We had a Children's Holy Week storytime Monday evening. Jason and Carla Weatherford led us in an online chat about counseling strategies for coping with COVID-19 on Tuesday. Rev. Chase offered a Holy Week Bible study Wednesday evening. On Maundy Thursday folks joined in an in-home Love Feast as they prayed over their dinner and reflected on Jesus' meal with his disciples. If you missed any of these videos or documents, they are posted on the church Facebook page and webpage. Return to them anytime! What's next?

Park & Pray, TODAY, 6pm: Community leaders including the mayor's office and the administration of Arkansas Methodist Medical Center invite you to park at AMMC from 6-6:30pm for a time of community prayer. I and others will be praying via radio at 107.1 FM.

Good Friday, 7pm: Stream this evening's Good Friday service as you would Sunday services. This will be a Tenebrae service focused on the Stations of the Cross images currently hanging in the Welcome Center. The order of service is posted online at fumcparagould.org/homebound.

Easter Sunday, April 12: We will celebrate Easter Sunday through online services at 9am and 11am. Again, the order of service can be found online. Also, we are partnering with MOR Media to have our 11am service broadcast at 107.1FM so we can reach folks beyond internet streaming.

Next Week: Here's a brief snapshot of next week's plans for online ministry:

Sunday, April 12

stream 9am & 11am Easter Services

7pm Youth Group Zoom

Monday, April 13: 7pm Children's Storytime via Facebook Live

Wednesday, April 15

7pm Pastor's Bible Study via Facebook Live

Youth Online Games

Thursday, April 16: 7pm Worship Moment via Facebook Live

Sunday, April 19

stream 9am & 11am Services

4pm Children's Zoom Social

6pm Finance Committee Meeting via Zoom

7pm Youth Group Zoom

Obviously the longer the church does not meet in person, the greater the challenge of *not* receiving a weekly offering becomes. I share my most sincere gratitude to you all for keeping up your financial support of the church by mailing your offering or giving online (fumcparagould.org/giving). The Easter season is traditionally a time of strong giving at ours and most churches. I hope that will be the case this year. At the same time, I am aware some of you are experiencing newfound financial hardships including perhaps reduced hours or job loss at no fault of your own. I am sensitive to this challenging moment. If you are able, please continue or grow in your generosity to the church. If you are struggling financially in this season, you are in my prayers. Contact me if we can help you or your family in some way.

Though today is not quite Easter, I look forward to celebrating with you on Sunday. Our hearts will be lifted up as we worship together. Meet me online or via radio as we say together: Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

Amen! Alleluia! Happy Easter!

Rev. Dane

livestreaming: Find us online/Facebook live/PLWC

Our 9:00 and 11:00 worship services are live streamed each week on our website:

www.fumcparagould.org. You may also access archived services on our website on the media page.

You can also find us live on Facebook on Sunday mornings at 11:00.

PLWC cable channel 6 broadcasts our service as follows (they are a week delayed):

9:00 am on Sunday (Traditional)

3:00 pm on Sunday (Contemporary)

5:00 pm on Sunday (Contemporary)

Prayer Requests

Requests will generally remain listed for 4 weeks.

Our world	Carol Clary
Mike Patten	Hillis Pratt, Jr.
Judy Harsson	Shelby Swink
Johnny Baldwin	Wyatt Rudi
Patricia Battles	Ken Fletcher
Steve & Charlese Park	Philip Brasher
Gary Newby	Noa & Elysia Willis
Jerry Cunningham	Unspoken requests
Bill & Ina Puckett	
Bob Adams	



Finance

2020 Operating Budget: \$1,249,403

Week ending Sunday, April 5	Received YTD: \$242,060
Contributions mailed in: \$16,660	Loan Balance: \$3,735,613
Online contributions: \$3,848 (fees \$78.66)	Dollar a Week 2020: \$2,193

Easter Memorials/Honorariums

In Memory of:

Bill & Beth Clark by Shane & Liz May and Anna Teager
Huey, Gerri & Kevin May by Shane & Liz May and Anna Teager
Wayman Justice by Mary Justice
Frances Albright by her family

In Honor of:

Jerry & Jerry Ann Cunningham by Greg, Michele, Lauren & Garrett
Dr. Leonus & Marcia Shedd by Cary & Robert Lattus and family

Easter Memroails and Honorariums were made to other funds for the following:

In Memory of:

Sam Bridges by Gloria Bridges
Vaughn Matlock by Shane & Liz May and Anna Teager
Kitty Raley by Shane & Liz May and Anna Teager
Tom Blossom by Shane & Liz May and Anna Teager

Memorials received this past week:

Tom Blossom by Clifford & Beverly Gordon, Stewart & Kathy Runsick, Jimmie Lou Fisher, Nathan & Angela Newby
Vaughn Matlock by Clifford & Beverly Gordon, Pairs & Spares Sunday School Class
Fred Wilcox by Nathan & Angela Newby

Attendance

Streaming

We are streaming both the 9 & 11 worship services on Sunday morning. It is difficult to calculate just how many are watching, but following are the number that are provided us:

April 5
9:00 Contemporary Service
Onlinestreaming: 42
Facebook: 94

11:00 Traditional Service
Online streaming: 51
Facebook: 42