

The Shepherd's Voice



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Mountain Park United Methodist Church

Journey to the Cross in this Lent Loving Our Community on the Way



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Pastor's Corner

We are in the middle of Lent. This is a time when we are reminded starkly who we are and who God is. We are the created, we are God's children, we are ephemeral and dust, and God is our Creator, Abba Father, and our purpose and our reason for being! We are created in the image of God, we have become alive by God's spirit, we have been shaped by God's Word, we have been affirmed by God's love, and we are sustained by God's grace. That's who we are! We exist because of God and for God's glory! We are beautiful, resilient, and strong with God but we are frail, weak, sinful, and helpless apart from God. That's who we are!



These past couple of months reminded me of our mortality starkly. I am still in shock with the passing of my candidacy mentor, Rev. Martha Forrest, still crying over my dear friend's passing, Rev. Jack Gilbert whom I have known for over 30 years, and still can't grasp that one of my buddies who is younger than me has terminal liver cancer. A lot of reminders. As Psalm 90 tells us like it is:

The days of our life are seventy years,
or perhaps eighty, if we are strong;
even then their span is only toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away...
So teach us to count our days
that we may gain a wise heart.

Lent is a time when we reflect on our frailty and mortality and be reminded that we are created in the image of God, became alive by God's spirit, shaped by God's Word, affirmed by God's love, and sustained by God's grace. It is not supposed to be a depressing time or a despairing time. It is a time that we check our relationship with God. It is a time that we get our life in order. It is a time that we practice dying to ourselves. It is a time that we realize that God does not give us solutions or answers to all life's problems, but God gives himself in Jesus Christ for us! Lent is a strengthening time! Lent is a time we grow up spiritually and gain a wise heart! Let's keep journeying together in this season of Lent.



Hope's Highlights



Easter month is upon us! We have had several volunteers hard at work to prepare for our Easter Egg Hunt on March 23rd! Thank you so much to everyone who has donated, helped stuff eggs, and volunteered help with crafts. Our biggest need as we approach the big day is bags of small candy - no bigger than 1" x 1.5" - to go in the abundance of small, empty eggs we have leftover. Please consider picking some up on your next grocery run. All donations can be dropped in the Youth Room or by the Front Desk.

Everyone is invited to join us for the event on Saturday, March 23rd, rain or shine! We'll have egg hunts for infants through 5th graders, crafts for the whole family, and a great time of fellowship and celebration. Church members - consider coming and helping greet our community! Youth volunteers are needed an hour prior to the event (9AM) to help hide the eggs, so bring along your middle and high schoolers as well. It's sure to be a wonderful morning!



We've had a great spring semester with our MPUMC Kids and Youth so far! Some of our highlights have been Scout Sunday and Ash Wednesday services. We love involving our young ones in the life and worship of the church. We are looking forward to an amazing summer with Vacation Bible School, our youth mission trip, and so much more, so stay tuned!

Hope Lewellen, Dir of Family Ministries
770-921-8512

hope.lewellen@mountainparkumc.org

Lunches of Love - Lenten Challenge

40 DAYS OF LOVE LENTEN CHALLENGE

This is a Lenten opportunity to search among our abundance to help others. During each week of Lent, search for items in your home that you no longer use that match a need on our "Love-It-Again List" and put them in a bag. With each item, take a moment to reflect and pray for those that may now receive and cherish this gift.

Please only donate items that have been cleaned and are in a giftable condition.

LOVE-IT-AGAIN LIST:

WEEK
1

TREASURES

- Toys for 0-3-year-olds
- Toy Trucks and Cars
- African American Dolls
- Jewelry
- Jar Candles
- Gifts you have received that you love but cannot use

FROM THE KITCHEN

- Flatware/Silverware
- Pots and Pans
- Coffee Mugs
- Mixing Bowls
- Coffee Makers
- Crock Pots

WEEK
2

WEEK
3

FROM THE BATHROOM

- Soap
- Toothbrushes
- Toilet Paper
- Gift Sets: Lotions, Soaps, Nail Polish, etc.
- Other Unopened Toiletries: Toothpaste, Razors, Shampoo, Conditioner, Deodorant

FROM THE CLOSET

- Coats (all sizes, infant through Adult 6XL)
- Pullover Hoodies (all sizes)
- Winter Hats, Gloves, Mittens, Scarves

WEEK
4

WEEK
5

HOLIDAY STORAGE

- Mini Christmas Trees
- Mini Christmas Ornaments
- Christmas Wrapping Paper

EXTRA SUPPLIES

- Reusable Grocery Bags
- Scotch Tape
- Scissors
- School Supplies
- Cleaning Supplies: Bleach, Lysol, Buckets, Sponges, Laundry Detergent

WEEK
6

ON (OR BEFORE) EASTER, MARCH 31, BRING YOUR ITEMS TO THE FAMILY LIFE CENTER AT MOUNTAIN PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 1405 ROCKBRIDGE ROAD, STONE MOUNTAIN (USE POPULAR DRIVE ENTRANCE).

*Please do not add additional items that are not on the list.

questions? lunches@mountainparkumc.org

Sermon Series: Jesus in Conflict

3/3/24 Jesus in Conflict: Corruption [John 2:13-22](#)

3/10/24 Jesus in Conflict: Worldly Desires [John 12: 20-33](#)

3/17/24 Jesus in Conflict: Judas [Mark 14:10-19](#)

3/24/24 Jesus in Conflict: Pilate [Mark 15: 1-15](#) **Palm Sunday**

3/31/24 Jesus in Conflict: He is Risen! Rise with Him: [Mark 16: 1-8](#) **Easter Sunday**



Wednesday Night Dinner Menus

Menus are posted for March. Check this website:

<https://www.mountainparkumc.org/wnd>

Please sign up by Monday afternoon to help our Kitchen Staff plan for the meal. Drop-ins are always warmly welcomed.

Mission News

Trinity Table - Homeless Mission



Music Ministry

Hello from the Music Ministry! We have a few exciting events and services coming up.

On Palm/Passion Sunday, March 24th, we'll feature a special instrumental ensemble, along with the chancel choir and handbell choir. If you play an instrument, at any level, or are at least willing to make a noise, you are welcome to join us! All ages, skill levels, and instruments are invited. You don't even need to read music.

The following Sunday, March 31st, is Easter! We'll be featuring excerpts from Hadel's *Messiah*, including the magnificent Hallelujah Chorus. The service will close in grand fashion with a sing-along, so get ready to belt!

Lastly, our Spring Concert, ***A Tide of Mornings***, is scheduled for Saturday, April 20th at 7:30 PM. We always welcome new choir members, but the concert is a chance to join for a limited run. Designated concert rehearsals begin on Wednesday, April 3rd.

So many great ways to get involved. Contact Dr. David Walters with any questions.



Financial Update

- **Financials as of 2/18/24**
 - Operating Cash: \$ 99,431
 - Designated Cash: \$ 233,417

 - YTD Budget Needed \$ 195,701
 - YTD Actual Expenses \$ 160,084
 - YTD Revenues \$ 147,302

- **Piano Restoration Fund Update**
 - Funds Needed : \$ 50,000
 - Amount Pledged: \$ 18,360
 - Amount Received: \$ 7,430

The restoration will begin when the \$50,000 is received.



Glory Hallelujah! Congratulations Mountain Park!

The Barnes Evaluation and Administration Team (B.E.A.T.) approved our application for a \$45,000.00 Grant! Thank you CHURCH for all your prayers! Thank you, Rev. Charles Barnes, who this grant is named after! Most of all, THANK YOU, GOD! for this gift and encouragement!

Lunches of Love - Service

Spring Break Food Delivery

Please help us by donating needed items for the meal kits we are assembling for our Spring Break Food Delivery in the food desert neighborhoods served by Lunches of Love. This is just one portion of the food and supplies we are preparing to help ease the food insufficiency for low income families during the week that kids are home from school. It's a short shopping list but WE ARE LOOKING FOR 300 OF EACH ITEM BY THIS COMING SUNDAY, March 10th.

If Amazon makes your life easier... you can shop by clicking the button below. If you'd prefer for us to shop for you, or if you'd like to donate towards the cost of purchasing the meat and spices that go along with this meal kit, feel free to make an online donation here (please scroll down to change the fund to "Lunches of Love"): <https://onrealm.org/mountainparkumc/-/form/give/default>

or text **"give2mpumc" to the number 73256**. Follow the link, change the fund to "Lunches of Love", then complete your gift.

If you are shopping and dropping off, please drop off items by Sunday, March 10. Drop off in the Family Life Center on Wednesday 5:30 - 6:30pm, Thursday 6:30 - 8pm or Sunday 9:30 - noon. There will also be a drop off location in the Narthex on Sunday morning.

SPRING BREAK Lunches of Love
Grocery List

The items on this list will be distributed to families living in nearby food desert neighborhoods during spring break when the kids are out of school and food needs increase dramatically.

NEEDED NON-PERISHABLE ITEMS:

- Can of Black Beans, 15 oz.
- Can of Kidney Beans, 15 oz.
- Can of Diced Tomatoes, 28 oz.
- Bag of Chips, family size

We need a total of 300 of each of these items! Every donation helps!

PLEASE RETURN THIS BAG WITH DONATIONS OF THE ITEMS LISTED ABOVE BY MARCH 30TH

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY TO THE MEAT, RICE, AND BREAD WHICH WILL BE PURCHASED IN BULK TO GO ALONG WITH THESE ITEMS YOU CAN MAKE A MONETARY DONATION:

1. Checks may be made out to Mountain Park United Methodist Church. Note: "Lunches of Love" on the memo portion of the check. Place checks in offering basket or mail checks to: Mountain Park United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 871147, Stone Mountain, GA 30087

2. Online donations may be made at www.mountainparkumc.org Click on the "GIVE" button in the upper right hand corner. Scroll down to the blue "GIVE NOW" button. Under "Fund": scroll down to indicate "Lunches of Love".



"A Peek at Preschool"

We are so excited for Spring and for all the regrowth and renewal! The Preschool is so honored to be named Among the Best in Gwinnett!! We have been growing our enrollment for the next school year during our early bird registration and have over 25 students registered for the 2024-2025 school year already! Thank you for voting and continuing to spread the word about the awesome Preschool ministry that we are blessed with at Mountain Park UMC.

In moving forward with growth and renewal, it is time for a little Spring cleaning at the preschool. We are calling all volunteers that are willing to come out and help spruce up our playground area on Saturday, March 16th from 8am - 10am. We are getting a delivery of mulch that will need to be moved onto the playground and we are hoping to have enough hands to also help clean our small playground equipment. We could use wheelbarrows, buckets and rags as well as a couple of pressure washers to help in this endeavor. If you are able to volunteer or help with supplies, please email Beth McWilliams at beth.mcwilliams@mountainparkumc.org. We always love to come together with the wider church community, whether in service or celebration. On March 21st we invite any and all to come celebrate a preschool spirit night at Chick-fil-A in Stone Mountain from 4pm - 8pm. Enjoy some dinner and fellowship and a percentage of your meal gets donated back to the school.

Easter season is truly a blessed time to celebrate. Our littles created a beautiful paper quilt that is hanging on the preschool hall that we will continue to talk about through March as we celebrate this holy season. We hope that the picture will also bring you joy. That is just a little peek at what's happening in preschool.

In His Service
Beth McWilliams,



Meet New Members

Kathy Ashby Ontiveros

Hello! I am glad to be a relatively new member of Mountain Park UMC! After retiring from a long career as a high school German teacher (known to thousands by now as Frau Ashby!), I moved from southern Illinois to the Lilburn area in April of 2023. I am a widow, and my only



"child" is my four year old dachshund mix named Schaefer. I moved to this area to be closer to my brother and his family, who live in Decatur, and it has been great to be near them over the past several months! I also have one sister, who currently lives in New Jersey. After visiting several churches in this area last summer, I felt like Mountain Park UMC was a good fit for me, and I have been so grateful for the warm reception here. It was important to to me to find a church that reflects the love of God in many ways, including through service to others through programs such as Lunches of Love and the Trinity Table. Since joining the church, I have been participating in the chancel choir and thoroughly enjoying

singing under Dr. David's direction! We are blessed to have outstanding leaders in both worship and music at MPUMC! I enjoy painting and doing volunteer work (tutoring students and recording articles for MindsEyeRadio.org), and adding meaningful church events to my schedule has been an important link that helps me grow in my faith. I am grateful to have found a new church family at Mountain Park UMC!

Nancy Boehm



Nancy was born and raised in Knoxville, TN. She received her Bachelor of Music Education degree from Georgia State University, a Master of Music Education from West Georgia College, Educational Specialist in Music Education from Georgia State. She taught choral music in middle and high schools in Coweta, Cobb, and Floyd counties for 36 years. Nancy served as State Choral Chair for the Georgia Music Educators Assn. for three years and was named Georgia Music Educator of the year in 2002. Nancy and her recently deceased husband, JC, moved in 2021 to this area from Cave Spring, GA where they ran the Tumlin House Bed and Breakfast for 23 years. She has two sons. David lives in Lilburn with his wife, Megan and two children, Matthew and Lennon. Jason lives in Pennsylvania with his wife, Becky, and two daughters, Hannah and Ellie. Nancy has enjoyed singing in the choir and playing handbells for the last few months at Mountain Park UMC and is happy to become a part of the church family here.



Set your clocks one hour ahead this Sunday, March 10, 2024, 2:00 am to Sunday, March 10, 2024, 3:00 am!

A background image of white Easter lilies with green leaves. In the top right corner, there is a small logo consisting of four colored shapes (yellow, blue, green, orange) arranged in a cross pattern.

Order Easter Lilies by March 20, 2024

SCAN ME



Order Forms Available at the Church Office

Holy Week Schedule

**Palm Sunday
March 24**

**Contemporary Service (FLC) at 1045 AM
Traditional Service (Sanctuary) at 1100AM**

**Holy Thursday
March 28**

**Virtual Service
Family Friendly Service
Facebook Live**

**Good Friday
March 29**

**Unified Service in the Sanctuary at 630 PM
Childcare provided.**



Happy Easter



**Saturday, March 30 from 1-5pm
(preferred) or Easter morning.**

Please bring fresh cut flowers and greenery from your garden or yard (or the store) to the front doors of the sanctuary on Saturday, March 30 from 1-5 pm (preferred) or Easter morning. We will adorn the cross and the church to celebrate and be a witness to the resurrection.

He is Risen!

**Easter Sunday
March 31**

**Contemporary Service (Family Life Center) at 10:45 AM
Traditional Service (Sanctuary) at 11:05 AM**

Jesus in Conflict: He is Risen!
Mark 16: 1-8

We are excited to invite you to our upcoming
Preschool Sunday Worship Service...

SUNDAY, APRIL 21ST

FAMILY LIFE CENTER - 11AM

... a whole worship service designed
especially for our preschoolers and families!



MOUNTAIN PARK
united methodist church
Living Jesus. Loving Community.



Check out all of our upcoming events by scanning the code above!

ARC

(Agape Reconciling Community)



General Conference Info Sessions

The 2024 UMC General Conference will be held April 23 – May 3, 2024, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Join the MPUMC Agape Reconciling Community (ARC for short) for a series of 3 General Conference Info Sessions on 4/10, 4/17, and 4/24 from 6:15-6:45 pm in the FLC after Wednesday Night Dinner. We'll construct a timeline of important events in the history of the UMC, discuss the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, and have a Q & A session with one of our Pastors on what to expect from the 2024 General Conference. Come and share this time with us!