

Wesley Grove **Messenger**

April 2025

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Blessings of Easter to All of You!



And here's to April! Spring is finally here, even though some days still don't feel like it. Look outside and you will see a variety of different flowers blooming, trees budding, and other plants starting to sprout. Perhaps you've had a chance to see the cherry blossoms bloom or perhaps you've seen my favorite: magnolia trees bursting to life. Creation is blooming all around us; we just have to look outside.

This season is truly my favorite season! While allergy headaches and sneezing aren't so fun, it's a very grounding time for me. In particular, this early stage of spring blooming that we find ourselves in is my all-time favorite. Yes, seeing the flowers later in their full glory is beautiful but there's just something so amazing about seeing the tiny green buds start to peek out amid the dirt. It reminds me that "this too shall pass." It reminds me that the darkness of the winter is only temporary; that the warmth and new life of spring will indeed come back. This liminal space between the bleak winter and the full bloom of spring is a time that invites hope.

At first glance, this sense of hope feels in stark contrast to the Season of Lent in which we find ourselves. During Lent, we are often alone in the wilderness, wandering, reflecting on our mortality and how we live our lives. The Lenten Season begins every year with a somber reminder that we are just dust and one day, to dust we shall return. It is often a season associated with sacrifice, self-denial, and wandering in the desert with Jesus. However, I think there are more similarities between a hopeful spring and a somber Lent than it first appears. After all, the word *Lent* can be traced back to Old English, where it meant "spring season" or "lengthening of days." Indeed, Lent is springtime for our souls, for our spirituality, and for our relationship with God and one another.

As the flowers continue toward full bloom over the next few weeks, I think our spiritual lives are also in a process of becoming. Lent is not just about being in the wilderness; it is also a time of preparing our hearts and minds for the new life: the resurrection on Easter morning. This season we are in is about tending to the soil of our souls, allowing God to work within us, making space for the new growth.

Before we know it, in just three weeks, we will arrive at Easter morning, and we will celebrate the ultimate renewal: Jesus' victory over death. Just like the spring season, Easter reminds us that God is always bringing forth new life, even when we can't yet see it. As we journey closer and closer to Easter, I want to challenge all of you to see where new life is starting to bloom within you and around you and to reflect on where you see glimpses of spring, signs of new life, and reminders of resurrection within this liminal phase in which we're living.

With Easter joy,
Pastor Abby

Lectionary Readings



April 6, 2025

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Isaiah 43:16-21

Psalms 126

Philippians 3:4b-14

John 12:1-8

April 13, 2025

Palm and Passion Sunday

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalms 31:9-16; 118:1-2, 19-29

Philippians 2:5-11

Luke 19:28-40; 22:14—23:56

April 20, 2025

Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43

Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18



April 27, 2025

Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 5:27-32

Psalms 150

Revelation 1:4-8

John 20:19-31



April Birthdays

- 1 Randy Falk
- 5 Katie Ketchum Vitullo
- 8 Judy Briggs
- 16 Sally Swearingen
- 17 Mike Sherwood
- Kenny Benson
- 19 Cara Lynagh
- 23 Michael Mirani
- 25 Scott Iles
- 28 Kris Kemp Kepner



February 2025 Financial Report

Rick Monarch, Treasurer

Expenses

BWC Mission Share	\$1,335.81
Senior Pastor's Salary (1/3 of total salary)	\$835.33
Associate Pastor's Salary (1/3 of total salary)	\$663.17
Office Manager's Wages	\$433.50
Organist / Pianist	\$400.00
Music Director	\$400.00
Worker's Compensation Insurance	\$0.00
BWC Annual Conference for Lay Delegate	\$0.00
Payroll Taxes	\$83.91
Capital Improvement Costs	\$0.00
Grass Cutting Costs	\$0.00
Snow Plowing Costs	\$1,641.00
Groundskeeper Costs	\$0.00
Custodian's Salary	\$420.00
Programs	\$183.07
Property Insurance	\$0.00
Administrative Expenses	\$149.32
South Damascus Charge Treasury	\$122.24
Trustees - Maintenance Costs	\$2,673.35
Parsonage Property Taxes	\$0.00
Montgomery County Solid Waste Tax	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	\$615.12
Total Expenses	\$9,955.82

Income

Weekly Collections	\$3,866.00
Cell Tower Rental Fee from Sprint	\$2,299.33
Rental Property Income	\$0.00
Total Income	\$6,165.33

Fellowship News

Becky Lewis, Chair

Share in receiving the Good News of the Resurrection with your Wesley Grove family at our annual Easter Sunrise Service next to the pavilion, then come inside the hall to the warmth of a fellowship breakfast. Everything is provided for the April 20 event; all you need to do is sign up in the vestibule to give the committee an idea of the number coming. And even then, if you hadn't planned to come, but are moved at the last minute to get up and greet our Risen Lord, please come to breakfast anyway. Like the loaves and the fishes, there's always plenty!



It's only a few short weeks after Easter to our next big event, the annual Spring Community Yard Sale on Saturday, May 10, from 9 am until 2 pm. It's never too soon to start cleaning your closets and gathering your "elephants" and "fleas," either to sell at your own space or to donate for sale at the church booth. Please let Tammy (301-253-0044) know if you'd like to rent a space. If you can help sort and price the day before, set up, help with food sales, and/or clean up on the day of the event, please let Becky (240-338-3211) or Brian (240-338-3210) know.

Also, mark your calendars for our annual Mother's Day Breakfast the next day, Sunday, May 11, at 9:30 am. Men, please see Brian to find out how you can help.

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## Kinship Singers



You are all invited to the second spring concert of our local choral group. The event will be held on Saturday, April 5 at 5 pm at Camp Hill Wesley UMC in Harper's Ferry. The musical theme for this free concert is "Under the Stars." All who love listening to beautiful music from a variety of genres are welcome!

## We're Looking for 2025 Graduates!



Please email or call the church office if you know of anyone in our extended Wesley Grove Church Family who will be graduating this spring from high school, college, graduate school, or trade/technical school. Just like in years past, we will highlight these students and their accomplishments in the May issue of this newsletter.

Remember that we also offer Wesley Grove collegiate scholarships to those in our congregation who have actively participated in the life of this church while attending middle and high school. If you would like to receive an application, please contact Tammy in the church office. All applications are due back to the church by Wednesday, April 30. Recipients will be notified in May.

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BINGO, Anyone???

The Damascus Volunteer Fire Department will host its spring Dinner and Bingo Fundraiser on Friday, April 25. Just like in the past, the doors will open at 5 pm, fried chicken dinners will be served starting at 5:30 pm, and the 20 games of bingo will begin at 7 pm. If you are interested in joining the group of us from Wesley Grove attending this event, please contact Jim and Lois Kemp at 301-253-2859 no later than Friday, April 18, to reserve your tickets, which cost \$50 per person. If you decide to wait and buy them at the door, the price increases to \$60 per person. All proceeds benefit our local fire department and the events of Celebrate Damascus Weekend in July.



Mission News

Linda Chatterton, Chair

Right now in the United States, 400,000 children are in foster care programs in the United States and more than 270,000 more enter these programs every year. While some kids “age out,” the total number of children is continuing to grow. Youth entering foster care often carry their belongings in trash bags, and they continue to do so for move-after-move making them feel more and more like “throw-aways.”

Comfort Cases, a nonprofit organization, was founded on the vision of eliminating this indignity and ensuring that no child ever has to carry his or her belongings in a trash bag. I learned of this organization, whose national headquarters is right here in Gaithersburg, while trying to donate some extra suitcases, and I found the workers there to be an amazing group of volunteers!

What is a *Comfort Case*? It is a backpack or small duffel bag that provides dignity to youth in foster care. These cases are packed with needed supplies, including new pajamas, undergarments, toiletries, etc. Yep, toiletries — a match made in heaven for Wesley Grove UMC! I delivered a large box of our collection and the workers were thrilled. In fact, I agreed on behalf of Wesley Grove to continue to provide these items as we collect them. For more information regarding the donation of these necessities, please visit www.comfortcases.org.

Spring and summer vacations are coming! Please remember to collect the small bottles of shampoo, conditioner, lotion, mouthwash, body wash, and the mini bars of soap from your hotel rooms while traveling. We are also collecting new toothbrushes, toothpaste, and deodorant for the older kids as well as small bottles of baby toiletries for the young (i.e. --- baby sham-

poo, baby lotion, baby powder, baby wash, baby wipes, and diaper ointment).



As you collect them, please bring these items to the collection baskets in the vestibule, and we will continue to donate these much needed personal products to *Comfort Cases*, so that this wonderful organization can continue to provide a little touch of home and security to the many children in our U.S. foster care programs.

Once again, a big thanks goes out to all of you in advance for your help with this meaningful community project!

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## Education News

*Tammy Monarch, Chair*

On Sunday mornings and on Tuesday evenings, we will continue to study Adam Hamilton's book titled *The Message of Jesus* for another two weeks. Our Sunday School class will not meet on Easter morning.



Then on Sunday, April 27 at 9:30 am, we will begin a new four-week study with Pastor Nick on the history of the Celtic Church in Ireland. Feel free to join us for this mini-course in Irish church history. Pastor Nick is rich with knowledge in this area, and he loves sharing this information with all of us present.

He plans to base his lessons on the content of three books, but no worries! Participants are not expected to read these books; instead, just come wanting to learn and know more about how Celtic Christians were able to create small communities in a non-Christian area that produced faithful churches and expanded The Church in ways that were sensitive to the local, cultural norms.

This study will also be held at 7 pm on Tuesday evenings at Mt. Tabor UMC and via Zoom. Let Tammy know if you plan to participate and would like to receive this Zoom link.





## Pastor Abby's Church History Project



Pastor Abby has started her exciting new history project of capturing the stories of our three churches in the South Damascus Charge, and she would love to include you in the group of people with whom she speaks and gleans information.

The process is simple. You and you will plan a 30-60 minute timeframe in which you'll sit down together and share your story. This will include your connection to your church, approximate number of years you've attended, and what your church has meant to you throughout your life.

Whether you were born and raised in your church or came to it in adulthood, your story matters, and Pastor Abby wants to hear it! She plans to record these sessions to create an audio library of our oral histories. There will not be a video component of this project.

If you are interested in participating in this project, please call or email Pastor Abby at [abby.cefalo@gmail.com](mailto:abby.cefalo@gmail.com). In the subject line, please include your name and the church to which you belong to make it easier for her to keep these stories separated within her files.

We all are looking forward to hearing the final products of these interviews!

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Easter Flowers

If you would like to order flowering plants for Easter, please pick up an order form in the vestibule. We hope to have daffodils, hyacinths, tulips, and Easter lilies all as choices again this year. These plants cost \$12 each; order forms and money (cash or checks made payable to WGUMC) are due back to the church office by Palm Sunday, April 13. Plants will be available to take home after the 11 am worship service on Easter morning.



Holy Week Services

Make plans now to join us for these special worship services during the last week of Jesus' life:

Palm Sunday — April 13 @ 11 am @ WGUMC

Maundy Thursday — April 17 @ 7 pm @ Salem

Good Friday — April 18 @ 7 pm @ Mt. Tabor

Easter Sunday — April 20 @ 6:15 am (outdoor), followed by breakfast in the Fellowship Hall, and 11 am traditional worship (indoor) @ WGUMC

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## Community Events

We all are invited to several upcoming community events at area churches...

### Health and Wellness Fair at

Calvary UMC, located at 403 S. Main Street in Mt. Airy, on Saturday, April 5 from 10 am to 2 pm: More than 40 different health organizations and agencies will be participating. They will supply educational information, provide free testing and screenings, answer questions, and demonstrate some of their operations and services. Several area food trucks will also be present.



**Gospel Concert** at Taylorsville UMC, located at 4356 Ridge Road, just south of Taylorsville, on Saturday, May 3 at 7 pm: Come and enjoy an evening of both traditional and contemporary Americana Gospel music performed by Ernie Couch and Revival, a family group from Nashville, TN. This concert is free and open to the public.

A light dinner of sandwiches, sides, and desserts will be sold before the concert from 5-6:30 pm. The money raised from this fundraiser will help to support the missions and ministry of Taylorsville UMC.

## Administrative Council Meeting

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

**In Attendance:** Steven Arndt, Louise Burdette, Bob Burke, Cathy Burke, Linda Chatterton, Becky Lewis, Rick Monarch, Tammy Monarch, and Pastor Nick Works.

**Opening:** Bob began the meeting at 7 pm.

**Devotions:** Cathy began with a devotional reading about church leadership.

### Prayer Requests:

- Becky's mother, Mary Rose (97), will have her gall bladder removed on April 1.
- Rick's knee replacement surgery is this Friday.
- Jim Kemp is recovering from nasal cancer surgery performed this past Monday.
- Lew Burdette is at home and being treated for falls and pneumonia.
- The Stotz Family needs continued prayers .
- Jane Wilkes has Covid.

### Good News:

- Our Sunday School room was refurbished with a new rug, whiteboard, paint, and artificial plants.
- The pavilion and ballfield were cleaned up in time for the spring ball season to begin.
- Nick and Tammy had a good visit with Roberta Grimes and her brother, Sam.
- Steven and Linda will travel abroad on a 22-day cruise, beginning this coming Sunday.

**Previous Minutes:** The minutes from our January meeting, as printed in the February newsletter, were approved by all members.

**Old Business:** We voted to move our bimonthly Finance Committee and Administrative Council meetings from Monday nights to Wednesday nights.

**New Business:** Steven reviewed the nine issues to be voted on at this year's BWC Annual Conference in May. He gave us a brief summary of the content, and we then discussed how he should vote on each issue.

### Committee Reports:

**Communications** — Greeting cards continue to be sent to those in need and our church website is up-to-date with Holy Week information.

**Education** — Lenten book study is underway with *The Message of Jesus*, by Adam Hamilton, and is being taught during Sunday School and on Tuesday evenings at Mt. Tabor. Sunday school attendance continues to average 12 each Sunday and Tuesday nights average about 6-7.

**Fellowship** — Last Saturday's Games Night at Rick and Tammy's home was fun and attended by 17. Becky and Brian will prepare and serve breakfast after the

Sonrise Service on Easter Sunday.

**Finance** — February collection plate offerings were very low, which is usual for this month. We discussed the current large expenses of snow removal, a new parsonage furnace, and tree removal in the parsonage backyard. MoCo Gov't recently mailed property assessments for our two rental properties, and as expected, they both will increase by 17.7% over the next three years.

**Lay Leadership** — No new report this month.

**Ministry** — We met on January 16, but due to several absences and some confusion as to the organization of this new committee, we are reconvening tomorrow night to plan the church calendar from now until July.

**Missions** — Supplying personal care products to *Comfort Cases* is our Lenten Season mission project. Our Sunday School class began in March collecting many of the items that this organization requests. A basket is in the vestibule to collect these items from congregants.

**SPRC** — We met last week to complete quarterly reviews of our two pastors and their yearly goals.

**Trustees** — We have met with DSA Commissioners concerning this spring's use and maintenance of the ballfield and pavilion and an annual donation to the church. One in the amount of \$2,000 was received yesterday. Trustees will begin to obtain estimates for the removal of the smokehouse and backyard tunnel with ground backfill on the Staley Rental Property. We have HVAC service contracts in place with GAC and Tri-State on all four buildings and service dates have been set. The parsonage oil furnace will need to be replaced in the near future. The large tree in the parsonage backyard will be removed due to rot and falling limbs.

**Worship** — Our charge's Maundy Thursday Service will be held at Salem UMC and our Good Friday Service will be held at Mt. Tabor UMC, both at 7 pm. Sonrise Service will begin here at 6:15 am.

**Pastors' Reports:** Pastor Nick reflected on our combined Ash Wednesday service, safety presentation, confirmation class, and upcoming Holy Week Services. It is good to worship and fellowship with other local UM churches. Confirmation service will be on June 1 at Damascus UMC. He also shared that he has visited with six congregants and called many on the phone. Our Lenten book study is going well and he is currently preparing to teach a four-week study on the Irish/Celtic missionary church culture of the Middle Ages.

**Closure:** Pastor Nick will lead devotions at our next meeting on Wednesday, May 7, at 7 pm. Bob adjourned this meeting at 8:37 pm.



# April 2025



| Sun                                                                                                                 | Mon | Tue                                                                                                  | Wed                                                               | Thu                                                                 | Fri                                                                                                                 | Sat                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                     |     | 1<br>5:00 PM—<br>Lions Club Dinner<br>& Meeting<br>7:00 PM—<br>Lenten Book Study<br>@ MT & via Zoom  | 2                                                                 | 3                                                                   | 4                                                                                                                   | 5<br>10 AM—2 PM—<br>Health Fair @ Cal-<br>vary UMC<br>5:00 PM—<br>Kinship Singers<br>Concert |
| 6<br>9:30 AM—<br>Sunday School<br>11:00 AM—<br>Worship Service with<br>Communion                                    | 7   | 8<br>7:00 PM—<br>Lenten Book Study<br>@ MT & via Zoom                                                | 9                                                                 | 10                                                                  | 11                                                                                                                  | 12                                                                                           |
| 13 <b>Palm Sunday</b><br>9:30 AM—<br>Sunday School<br>11:00 AM—<br>Worship Service                                  | 14  | 15<br>5:00 PM—<br>Lions Club Dinner<br>& Meeting<br>7:00 PM—<br>Lenten Book Study<br>@ MT & via Zoom | 16<br>12:00 PM—<br>Lunch Out at Ma-<br>ma Angela's in Mt.<br>Airy | 17<br>7:00 PM—<br>Maundy Thursday<br>Worship Service @<br>Salem UMC | 18<br>7:00 PM—<br>Good Friday Wor-<br>ship Service @ Mt.<br>Tabor UMC<br><br><i>Deadline for<br/>May Newsletter</i> | 19                                                                                           |
| 20 <b>Easter</b><br>6:15 AM—<br>Sonrise Service<br>7:00 AM—<br>Fellowship Breakfast<br>11:00 AM—<br>Worship Service | 21  | 22<br>          | 23<br>3:00 PM—<br>Book Club Meet-<br>ing @ Cathy's<br>House       | 24                                                                  | 25<br>5:00 PM—<br>DVFD Spring<br>Fried Chicken<br>Dinner & Bingo<br>Fundraiser                                      | 26<br>    |
| 27<br>9:30 AM—<br>Sunday School<br>11:00 AM—<br>Worship Service                                                     | 28  | 29<br>7:00 PM—<br>Celtic Church His-<br>tory Class @ MT &<br>via Zoom                                | 30                                                                |                                                                     |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                              |

# **Wesley Grove**

## **United Methodist Church**

Church Phone: 301-253-2894

Email: [wgumc@wesleygroveumc.org](mailto:wgumc@wesleygroveumc.org)

### **As a Church Family that...**

- \* covenants to walk together in Christ's peace,
- \* believes that all persons are created equal,  
and
- \* affirms the inclusive love of Jesus Christ,

**We Welcome All to Our Work and Worship,**  
regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age,  
ability, sexual orientation, and/or economic  
circumstance.

**We're on the Web!**  
[wesleygroveumc.org](http://wesleygroveumc.org)

# **EASTERTIDE**

## **Is UPON Us**

*Alleluia  
and  
Amen  
to Our  
Risen Lord!*



To unsubscribe, please call the Wesley Grove UMC Office (301-253-2894) or email [wgumc@wesleygroveumc.org](mailto:wgumc@wesleygroveumc.org)

**Wesley Grove United Methodist Church**  
23640 Woodfield Road  
Gaithersburg, MD 20882