THE MESSENGER

MARCH 2023

Being a Holy Vessel

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, my brothers and sisters of Bethesda United Methodist Church!

As we prepare ourselves for a time for spiritual reflection, discernment and renewal during Lent, we acknowledge there are wounds and brokenness regarding our lives like broken vessels as we hold pieces of sea glasses on our palms.

Yet this Lent, we will be reminded that we are holy vessels of the Holy God as we store our prayers in a prayer jar, read and act on a Lenten Calendar each day, receive a Lenten text message each morning, study weekly with a Lenten Bible Study Group, and attend evensong services focusing on the healing of our mind, body and soul.

We are called to be a set-apart instrument of God for every good work.

A "Holy Vessel" sounds aesthetic. However, have you considered what that term means? Do we understand what it means to be "holy" and be a "vessel" of God?

First of all, let's think about being holy. In 1 Peter 1:16, Apostle Peter calls Christians. "You shall be holy, for I am holy." Most of us may feel challenged now since we are anything but holy. You may even ask, is it possible to be holy as a human being?

The Hebrew word for holy appears 1,282 times in the Bible (859 times in the Old Testament and 423 times in the New Testament). The Hebrew word for holy, שׁוֹדֶק ("qodesh"), means "apartness, sacredness, or separateness," showing that God is sacred, set apart or separate from God's creation. The Greek word used for holy is ἅγιος ("hagios"), which means "pure, morally blameless, or set apart," similar to the Old Testament.

A German theologian, Rudolf Otto, said God is the "wholly other," something beyond the grasp and understanding of the human experiment. Yet, God commanded us to be holy. So, what should we do? The good news is that our holiness lies in what John Wesley called sanctification, which means a lifetime ongoing transformation process as a "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1) to the glory of God. This means that we need the help of the Holy Spirit to sanctify us to take a daily walk with God to stay focused on transformation.

Now, how about being a vessel? The word "vessel" appears 228 times in the Bible (206 times in the Old Testament and 22 times in the New Testament). In the Old Testament, most times, the Hebrew word for vessel יִלְכ ("kliy") was used for utensils, bowls or containers. But in the New Testament, the Greek word, σκάφος ("skeuos") was used for instrument, and, in a few instances, it's a metaphor for a leader or a servant of God called for good work. For example, in 2 Timothy 2:21, "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." Here, it is clear that God would use the one who strives to keep themselves apart from sin as a leader for God's mission. Another example would be 2 Corinthians 4:7 says, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." In this verse, Paul and his co-workers testify that their faith in Christ strengthens their fragile humanity in times of suffering.

So, I hope now we all understand what it means to be God's Holy Vessel. Being a holy vessel of God means living a transforming life of a servant leader focusing on a Holy God through Jesus Christ. In summary, we as a church are called to be a set-apart instrument of God for every good work. The Bethesda United Methodist Church is called to be "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of God who called you out of darkness into God's marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

I pray that we enter into a spirituality of reflecting during this Lent, a time when we ask Jesus to show us the way because Jesus is the way to holiness. I pray for the courage to embrace the fear and anxiety we feel. I pray for your faithfulness to stay in discernment. How might you surrender yourself to the work of the Holy Spirit? How might we, BUMC, be the holy vessel that God is calling us to be?

May God bless you as you yield to love, dwell with the Holy Spirit and see God's presence in each other. After all, the words of Ezekiel would be the promise of spiritual renewal for you during this Lent: "I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezk 36:26).

Rev. HiRho

Worship

BUMC Welcomes New Members

If you notice someone who has been coming to worship, please invite them to become a member of this loving Christian community.

We would love for BUMC to be your church where anyone can feel at home.

Our membership class will meet four times, on March 2, 9, 16, and 30, from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom. We will learn about the United Methodist Church, BUMC's ministry areas - Serve, Grow, Worship, and Connect - and the denomination's and BUMC's history. We will also meet BUMC's leaders during the sessions. We will record each session so you can watch them if you miss one.

We will have the New Members' Reception Ceremony on March 26 during the Sunday Service at 11:00 am.

Order your Easter flowers and help beautify our Sanctuary for Easter Sunday. Pink tulips and yellow daffodils are available for $22 and blue hydrangeas for $30. **The deadline to order is Sunday, March 26th.** Order envelopes are available in the Narthex or you can order online (https://washmorefeet.org/easter-flowers/). Feel free to take your flower(s) home anytime after the 11:00 a.m. service on Easter (*no lilies because of the strong smell*).

Praying Together

There are two opportunities during the week to join with others from our church in prayer. You're invited to stop by the church on Wednesdays at noon and be part of a Taizé Prayer Service. This time of worship includes communion and will be led by Rev. HiRho and/or Dr. Shaw Brewer. Then, on Thursdays at noon, you are invited to be part of an online prayer time with Shaw Brewer and others from our congregation. Email Shaw for the Zoom link.

Worship Attendance

In-Person:	**Online:**
February 5 - 116	February 5 - 83
February 12 - 119	February 12 - 60
February 19 - 114	February 19 - 81
February 26 - 125	February 26 - 40

Altar Flowers

Want to help beautify our altar for worship on Sundays while also remembering or honoring a loved one? We invite you to sign up to provide an arrangement of flowers on the Sunday of your choice.

You can have us place an order from our florist, order one yourself from your choice of florist, or make your own arrangement from flowers picked from your garden. Just let us know your preference on our online signup (washmorefeet.org/flowers).

Questions? Contact Sue O'Hara.

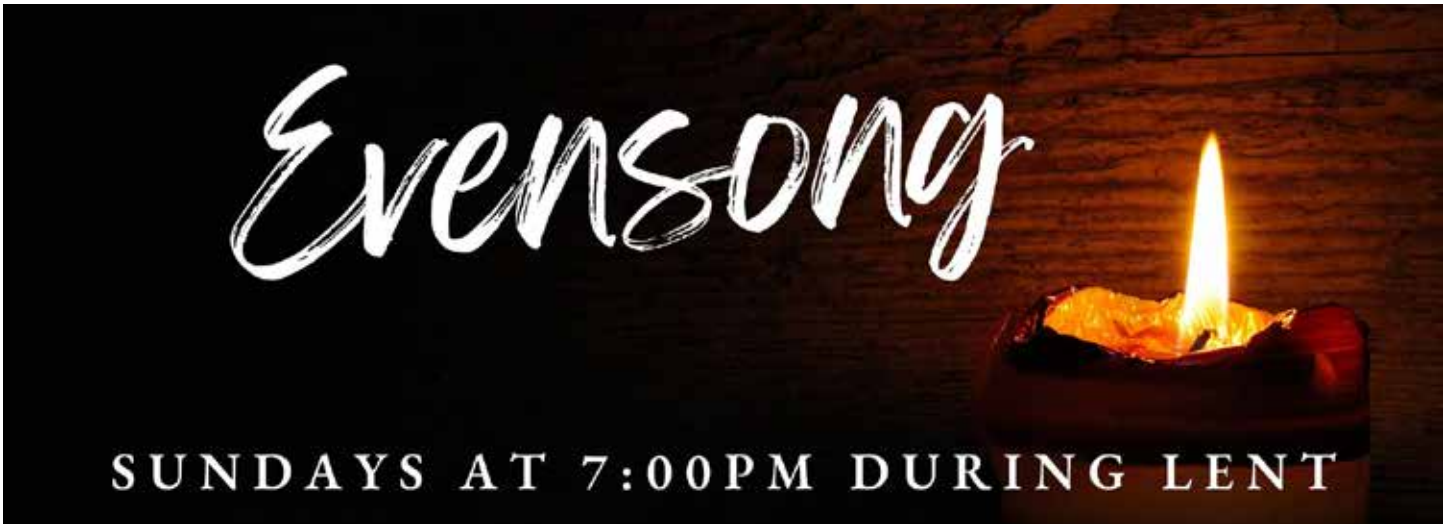
Ways to Give

- Online: Go to washmorefeet.org/give
- Text-to-Give: Text the amount of your donation to 301-679-7266
- Mail a check to the church office

Online Prayer Requests

If you wish to receive the list each week via email, please use the form on our website, https://washmorefeet.org/prayer-ministry to sign up. As always, we will continue to have the printed version of the prayer list available at our worship services. Please know that our prayer team will be praying for you and your loved ones throughout the week.

Lent



During Lent at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary, Evensong services will be held each Sunday through April 2 (Palm Sunday). Three groups of talented musicians will provide acoustic music with a different feel than what we normally have on Sunday mornings. The service will be intentionally designed for a quieter, contemplative approach with the theme of "Anointment," developed by Shaw Brewer. There are usually 5 songs (including some favorites such as REBEL and WOMAN at the WELL) woven in with prayer, scripture, a short message and communion. We hope you'll make this part of your Lenten spiritual practice each week.

Worship - Events - Gatherings

Women's Potluck

All women of the church are invited to the next potluck on Wednesday, March 22 at 6:30 p.m. It will be hosted by Sue O'Hara's home at 6817 Old Stage Rd., Rockville. To RSVP or to arrange to carpool contact Rebecca Conley (r33conley@gmail.com).

Lenten Prayer Bites:

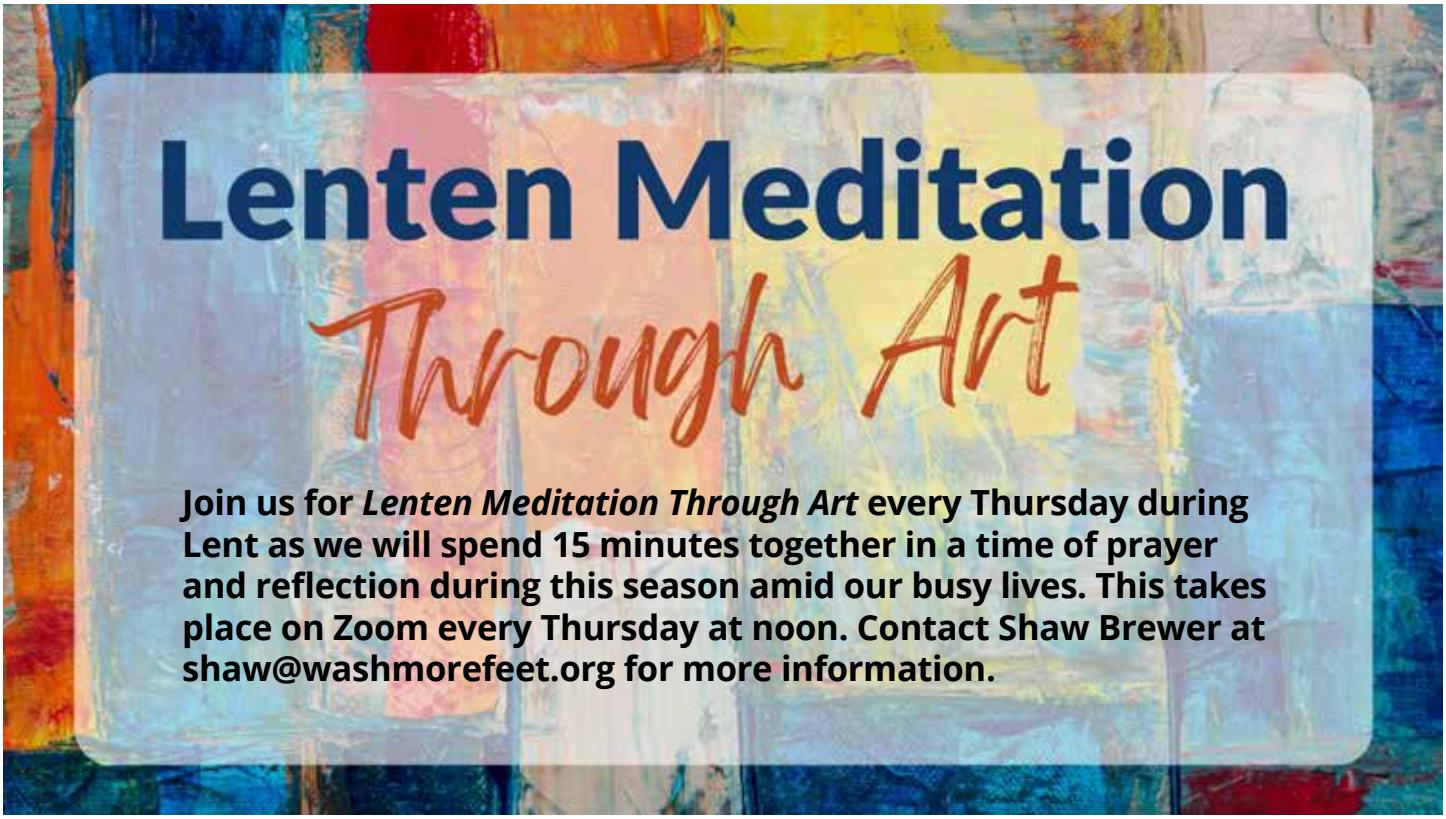
Bible Study on Holy Vessels

Starting on March 1, Rev. HiRho will lead Lenten Bible Study on Wednesdays during Lent. Dates will be March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, and April 5 from 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Please bring your own sandwich; the church will provide beverages. Join us! You will enjoy Bible study, music, prayer, fellowship, and updates on the sick.

Fasting Prayer for BUMC on Saturday, March 4

On the first Saturday of each month, we encourage you to fast as you pray for BUMC and its ministry. You can fast a meal or two or an entire day according to your health condition.

In March, please continue to pray that God will help BUMC be able to finance installing the sprinkler system throughout the education wing of the building.



Church Works

How is God Calling You?

Have you ever wondered what it takes to run a church? A church is the body of Christ here on earth and lay people are the heart of that body! Lay people serve on committees and on our Church Council to run our church and church programs. Lay people work alongside our staff to create and oversee our budget, manage and maintain our physical infrastructure, enhance and plan our weekly and seasonal worship activities, provide human resources and staff support, plan and develop educational and Sunday School activities, and create and administer our outreach programs which allow us to serve out into our community and world.

Every year we look for volunteers to fill the needs of our committees and Church Council. We'd like you to discern where you see yourself serving here at BUMC. Do you have a background in accounting, billing, bookkeeping or finance? Perhaps you might consider being on our Finance Committee. Do you work in project management or have a background in human resources? Perhaps you might consider being on the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC). Do you have a background in construction or maintenance, or just want to see our church property looking its best? Consider volunteering to serve on Trustees. Do you have children or youth and want to help to guide their spiritual growth and exploration? How about volunteering for our Education Committee positions? Do you love music, art or the seasons of worship? Consider being a volunteer on the Worship Committee.

We currently have needs on Trustees and Lay Leadership for the upcoming term, as well as openings for an Annual Conference Delegate and a Vice Chair for our Church Council. Please prayerfully consider how God might be calling you to serve this year and feel free to reach out to us or any of our current leaders listed below.

Lay Leadership Committee co-chair: Debbie Reed-Gillette

Lay Leader: Karen Fratantoni

Our Church Council

Co-Chairs:
Lynn Ricciardella
Pat Kirwan

Secretary: Bill Allman
Treasurer: John Borchert

Lay Leader: Karen Fratantoni
AC Delegate: Karen Fratantoni

Worship Reps:
Bill Allman
Cindy Osnos

Connect Rep:
Mary Ann Toomey
Rebecca Conley

Grow Rep:
Janine Gregory
Lisa Nevans-Locke

Serve Rep:
Shannon Snypp
Susan Bender

Youth Rep: Open
Young Adult Rep: Grace Gyanagawa

Trustees Chair: Jamie Hays
SPRC Chair: John Euler
Finance Chair: Bob Gillette
Stewardship Rep: Mike Moran

Mission and Advocacy

Gun Violence Prevention

Gun violence continues to plague our nation – at Michigan State University, in Mississippi, in Baltimore and Washington, DC. According to Shane Claiborne, president of Red Letter Christians, "We live in a scary world – hate crimes, bullying, sexual assault. But the promise of Scripture is that 'perfect love drives out fear' (1 John 4:18) ....Grace has the power to dull even the sharpest sword. There is something in the world that is more powerful than fear: love." – from *Beating Guns: Hope for People Who are Weary of Violence*, by Shane Claiborne and Michael Martin.

What else can we do?

- Provide love and understanding to those who are dealing with injury or trauma from gun violence. Support the Tra-Ron Center in Washington, DC for young trauma victims.
- Speak out – Are you a doctor or EMT? Law enforcement? Social worker? Teacher? Lift your voice and speak out about gun violence and its consequences.
- Write or email a letter to the editor on the issue and share with your friends and family.

Mission Monday

Our next Mission Monday at BUMC will be Monday, March 6, 2023. We will collect meat and cheese sandwiches and individual packages of homemade trail mix for Martha's Table in D.C. We will also collect canned goods and other non-perishable foods for Bethesda Help. Please bring your contributions to the Huntington Parkway Parking lot between 8:30 and 10:00 a.m. Please contact Bruce or Nancy Smith (301-765-5030) with questions. Thank you for sharing your love with our less privileged neighbors.

BUMC Joins With National UMC Advocacy Day!

Our voices can be considered when our representatives make important decisions at the state and national levels that impact the lives of our congregations and communities.

Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023

Time: All Day Event (Specific times will be announced as soon as possible.)

Location: United Methodist Building | 100 Maryland Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002

Attendance Limit: Due to COVID-19 regulations, this event will be capped at 40 registrants.

If you want to meet with our representatives to advocate for public policies consistent with United Methodist values and social principles, please contact Dr. Shaw Brewer at shaw@washmorefeet.org ASAP.

Bring a Friend on Heritage/Homecoming Sunday, March 19

Bethesda UMC is celebrating 173 years of serving the people of God on March 19. Rev. Wayne Dehart, who served as an associate pastor in 1973 and later became a senior pastor, will join us for a celebration with his wife Polly.

Invite one friend you have not seen for a while to join us for worship on that day and share fellowship with a potluck lunch.

Men's Group "Holy Vessels" Study

This year, the Men's Group is offering a special session of the Lent study groups. You are welcome to sign up for any of the Lent groups, but if you would enjoy discussing the material in the company of other men, please sign up for this group on Wednesdays at 7:30pm. The group will meet at Neil Gregory's home, 5204 Wilson Lane, starting on March 1.

The theme of this year's Lenten study is "Holy Vessels, A Lenten Season of Recovery". During the series, we will talk about how we are holy vessels created by God. We are also human vessels that experience many things in our lives, including illness, loss and heartache. The study will help us to realize again how valuable each of us is to God.

To sign up for the group, please email Neil Gregory at neilfgregory@icloud.com.

Project Transformation is Hiring!

We are hiring interns for our summer program now! If you know of college-aged young adults who love working with kids, and would also be interested in spending a summer exploring DC, have them apply at projecttransformation.org/washington-dc/. We look forward to connecting!

Financial Update

Thank you for your pledges and gifts to BUMC. They are critical to the financial health of our church and are the foundation of our budget process. After careful review and reflection, the Council was able to pass a balanced budget at our February meeting. A budget that covers our basic expenses is a wonderful outcome, and I appreciate all the work to get us to this point. Even though we have a budget, we know that there are many potential unexpected expenses that may occur in the coming year (as demonstrated by the heating system on February 12), and it is not too late to submit your pledge cards if you haven't already done so (washmorefeet.org/pledge2023). Your pledges help us plan and sustain the church. Thank you for your generous gifts and work to keep our church finances strong!

- Bob Gillette, Finance Chair

Children's Ministries

Hop On Over to the Egg Hunt!

Our annual church-wide Easter Egg Hunt is taking place on Sunday, April 9th at 10:00 a.m. in Greenwich Park. Kids in 5th grade and younger can participate in the hunt, so bring your basket (we'll have bags available in case you forget) and come join the fun. Coffee and light refreshments will be available in the park for all.

Prepare to stuff Easter Eggs this Year!

Individuals, groups, and families are invited to take empty plastic Easter eggs from the Narthex. Fill them with stickers, small toys and/or candy (no nuts please)! Return them by April 1st. Make plans to join us at church on Easter morning!

10:00 a.m. Sunday School

Children's Sunday School continues at BUMC. We continue our younger class for grades PreK - Grade 2 that meets upstairs in Room 102. Our older class for Grades 3 - 5 meets downstairs in the Chapel room (across from the youth room).

11:00 a.m. Sunday Worship

Let's WORSHIP Acolytes & Readers: We invite children to serve as acolytes and read scripture during our 11:00 a.m. Sunday morning worship services. Please email Kara Peace (Kpeace@washmorefeet.org) if your child would like to be included on our team of acolytes and/or our team of scripture readers. Kara is happy to work with children to help them prepare for each type of worship ministry plus we have online training that is simple and quick. We love having children be a part of our BUMC worship experience!

Kids With Purpose (KWP), our program for preschoolers – third graders that is held during the service. In March KWP will be making snack mixes for the homeless. The children will learn more about caring for the elderly and will make floral arrangements to brighten their day. At the end of the month we will make Easter packets and fill eggs for the church egg hunt!

Children who would like to participate sit with their families at the beginning of worship and head to KWP in Room 104 after the Children's Message. The return to the service before offering.

Volunteers needed! We are looking for adult leaders and youth helpers for KWP! Volunteering is a great way to serve our community and be a part of children's ministry. Little-to-no preparation is involved; lesson plans and supplies are provided. Contact Dennis Williams (dennis@washmorefeet.org) to sign up or learn more.

Nursery: Did you know we have nursery care each Sunday during 10:00 a.m. Sunday School and 11:00 a.m. Worship? Our Nursery has been a longstanding service at BUMC. If you would like your littles to receive care during the service or if you would like a calm place to step away from the service with them, come on by!

VBS This Summer: Hero Hotline!

Mark your calendars and plan to join us June 19 - 23 from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. as we join the Hero Hotline where we are called together to serve God at Vacation Bible School! We are excited to announce that this year we will be partnering with North Bethesda UMC, St. Paul's Kensington UMC and Concord St. Andrews UMC. (All activities will take place here at BUMC).

Our Hero Hotline will include exciting new music and dancing, amazing science and crafts, fun recreation and memorable Bible stories that will encourage children to turn to God for all they need and join God in providing for the needs of others.

Registration: VBS is open to all children ages 4 through rising 5th graders. Registration runs from March 1 - 27. Please use the registration link or find the information in your child's Sunday school class/KWP room/in the bulletin.

Youth Ministries

Join us this month for a variety of events and activities with BUMC Youth Ministries. More detailed information can be found in our weekly emails as well as the "band" group. Email Kpeace@washmorefeet to join our group messaging app for all the latest updates.

Are you looking for a way to actively participate in the worship service or just simply give yourself a new reason to come to church on Sunday morning?

Let's face it, going to church can be a hard thing to encourage yourself to do. Why not encourage yourself through participating in new ways? Youth can participate as scripture readers, acolytes, tech volunteers, Kids with Purpose volunteers and more! Email kpeace@washmorefeet.org for more information.

Youth Sunday School

Meet us Sundays at 10:00 a.m. in the youth room! Youth Sunday School is unlike any other! First, we get to spend time socializing, or playing ping pong or pool. Next, we talk about our weeks and catch up. To finish, we will participate in our topical devotion time that will typically consist of scripture reading, a brief explanation from the devotion leader, and discussion questions.

The best part about these discussions? The topics are chosen by YOU!

Youth Sunday School Calendar

March 5: Sunday Social with light breakfast
March 12: Sunday School
March 19: Sunday School
March 26: Sunday School

Liberty Grove Youth

United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF)

6:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted

Join us for our variety of events this month as we strive to connect, serve and grow together. Each month we connect with a fellowship active; we serve with a service project; and we grow with a faith formation night.

This month's special highlights include a worship feast at Liberty Grove UMC (15225 Old Columbia Pke, Burtonsville, MD) with the youth group there. We were able to have a worship feast with them here in October and now we get to go there! We will meet at BUMC at 5:30 p.m. to carpool or 6:00 p.m. at LGUMC. We will also have a Founders Day celebration dinner on the 19th and a service project on the 26th.

March 5: Worship Feast at Liberty Grove UMC
March 12: No UMYF (Kara Away)
March 19: Connect BUMC Birthday Party
March 26: SERVE

United Methodist Youth Fellowship

Thank you to everyone who came out in support of our youth ministries for the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner!

March 2023

BUMC Calendar

Mar 2023 (Eastern Time - New York)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 1st Sunday in Lent 9:30am - Children's Choir 9:45am - PTR Class @ 10am - Adult Sunday 10am - Winter VBS 11am - Blended Worship	27 7:30pm - Bethesda Bells	28 10am - Staff Meeting (in- 7pm - Capital Carillon @ 7:30pm - Lenten Small 7:30pm - Online Lenten	1 12pm - Lenten Prayer 7pm - Troop 204 @ 7pm - Troop 204 Parents 7:30pm - Men's Lenten 7:30pm - Women's Book	2 12pm - Meditation 6:15pm - Racial Justice 6:30pm - Praise Band @ 7pm - New Members 7:30pm - Outreach & 8pm - Sanctuary Choir @	3 7pm - Lenten Small Group	4
5 2nd Sunday in Lent 9:30am - Children's Choir 9:45am - PTR Class @ 10am - Sunday School 11am - Blended Worship 6pm - United Methodist	6 8:30am - Mission Monday 7:30pm - Bethesda Bells	7 10am - Staff Meeting (in- 7pm - Capital Carillon @ 7:30pm - Lenten Small 7:30pm - Online Lenten	8 12pm - Lenten Prayer 6:30pm - SPRC Meeting 7pm - Troop 204 @ 7pm - Troop 204 Parents 7:30pm - Church Council 7:30pm - Men's Lenten	9 12pm - Meditation 6:30pm - Praise Band @ 7pm - New Members 8pm - Sanctuary Choir @	10 7pm - Lenten Small Group	11
12 3rd Sunday in Grandparents' Day 9:30am - Children's Choir 9:45am - PTR Class @ 10am - Sunday School 11am - Blended Worship	13 7:30pm - Bethesda Bells	14 10am - Staff Meeting (in- 7pm - Capital Carillon @ 7:30pm - Lenten Small 7:30pm - Online Lenten	15 12pm - Lenten Prayer 7pm - Troop 204 @ 7pm - Troop 204 Parents 7:30pm - Men's Lenten	16 12pm - Meditation 6:30pm - Praise Band @ 7pm - New Members 8pm - Sanctuary Choir @	17 7pm - Lenten Small Group	18
19 4th Sunday in Lent Heritage - 9:30am - Children's Choir 9:45am - PTR Class @ 10am - Sunday School 11am - Blended Worship	20 7:30pm - Bethesda Bells	21 10am - Staff Meeting (in- 7pm - Capital Carillon @ 7:30pm - Lenten Small 7:30pm - Online Lenten	22 12pm - Lenten Prayer 6:30pm - Women's 7pm - Troop 204 @ 7pm - Troop 204 Parents 7:30pm - Men's Lenten	23 12pm - Meditation 6:30pm - Praise Band @ 8pm - Sanctuary Choir @	24 7pm - Lenten Small Group	25
26 5th Sunday in Lent 9:30am - Children's Choir 9:45am - PTR Class @ 10am - Sunday School 11am - Blended Worship 4pm - Racial Justice	27 7:30pm - Bethesda Bells 7:30pm - Online Lenten	28 10am - Staff Meeting (in- 7pm - Capital Carillon @ 7:30pm - Lenten Small 7:30pm - Online Lenten	29 Advocacy Day 12pm - Lenten Prayer 7pm - Troop 204 @ 7pm - Troop 204 Parents 7:30pm - Men's Lenten	30 12pm - Meditation 6:30pm - Praise Band @ 7pm - New Members 8pm - Sanctuary Choir @	31 7pm - Lenten Small Group	1

the Messenger

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