

A Walk
with
The Gardener



**A GUIDE THROUGH LENT AND EASTER
2024**

**Open Hearts United Methodist Church
Greenville, SC**



Greetings

We are coming out of a cold, dark winter and looking for that promise of sunny days and bright blooms that spring brings. God set the seasons into motion and we may find wisdom and guidance for our Lenten journey when we draw close to the mysteries of faith through the lessons found in the garden. Join us in discipleship and fellowship as we take “A Walk with the Gardener,” from the Garden of Eden to the Garden of Gethsemane, and back again.

The journey is more joyful together, and I invite you to join us and our church family as we walk into this new season of life. We are a new congregation experiencing our own new growth, springing forth with God’s blessing, with an 84% increase in membership since we began in July 2023. In this booklet you will see some of our current ministries that are already blooming, and we invite you to come join us.

Let us open our hearts to the mystery of God, to his boundless love and mercy. As we embrace the invitation to paradise, may we be transformed, renewed, and filled with an everlasting hope.

I humbly invite you to join us in the journey towards Easter at Open Hearts United Methodist Church.

Your Partner in Ministry,

Rev. Karen Jones
Lead Pastor, Open Hearts UMC



Sundays During Lent

The winter rains are still pouring in, puddling in abandoned garden beds that once held colorful annuals. The shrubs and fruit trees are pruned back and bare, patiently waiting for warmer days. As the hidden seeds in the ground take root and prepare for blooming, the world invites us to be observant and patient, while we participate in the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection.

This year, we will unlock/experience/perceive these mysteries in a new way, by encountering God and Christ through the symbol/allegory of Gardens. From the moment Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, God lamented the separation between himself and humanity. He longed to walk alongside us, to share in our joys and sorrows, but sin created a chasm that seemed impossible to bridge.

However, through Jesus' death and resurrection, that bridge was miraculously constructed. Jesus' resurrection was not just a restoration of physical life; it was the opening of a new reality, where humanity could once again dwell in the presence of God. The resurrection was the fulfillment of God's longing to be with us, to invite us back into the Garden, to restore the intimacy that was lost. This profound mystery is what we celebrate during Lent and Easter. It is not just a time to remember Jesus' sacrifice, but an opportunity to enter into the narrative of God's redemptive love.



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Sermon: “Creator and Gardener”

The story of Jesus’s death and resurrection begins at the very beginning, with God the Creator walking the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Sermon: “Cast Out of the Garden”

We once walked alongside God in the Garden, but sin now separates us from God and each other. This is not how it was meant to be. Can we ever return to what once was?

SUNDAY, MARCH 3

Communion

Sermon: “Tilling Wilderness into a Garden”

Our sin separates us from God, creates a wilderness in our hearts, and condemns us to death. Is it possible for God to turn graves into gardens?

SUNDAY, MARCH 10

Baptism

Sermon: “The Good Gardener”

Hear how scripture describes God as a gardener and how it prepares us for the story of redemption through Jesus Christ.

SUNDAY, MARCH 17

*Guest Preacher,
Rev. Dr. AV Huff*

Sermon: “Seeing Jesus”

Sometimes when we meet Jesus we find a totally unexpected experience. The Jesus we seek is often not the Jesus we find.

SUNDAY, MARCH 24

Palm Sunday

Sermon: “A Path of Palms”

The palms we burned to remember our sin and mortality on Ash Wednesday are seen again on Palm Sunday lining the path of Christ Jesus. The duality and paradox of joy and sorrow befit the season as we come closer to Easter.

SUNDAY, MARCH 31

Easter

Sermon: “The Gardner at the Grave”

Witness the transformation God gifts us when graves are turned into gardens, where sorrow blooms into joy, as the resurrected Jesus greets Mary, who mistakes him for a Gardener.

SUNDAY, APRIL 7

*First Sunday after Easter
Communion*

Sermon: “Back to the Garden of Eden”

Jesus’s resurrection is a promise of redemption and a pathway back to the Garden where God dwells, a new one, where there are no tears, sorrow, or pain. We end our series in Revelation, where God the Gardener greets us in our own final victory through Jesus Christ.

Special Services



ASH WEDNESDAY ASHES

Wednesday, February 14

7:30 - 9:00 am (drop in); 6:00 pm (service)
Sanctuary

Drop-In Imposition of Ashes:

Start your Ash Wednesday with the devotional practice of receiving ashes during our drop-in time in the Sanctuary. Pastor Karen will be available to impose ashes and offer a prayer if you desire. Please use the Welcome Center entrance. Parents dropping off children at the childcare center are invited to bring their children for either ashes on their forehead or a stamp on their hand.

Ash Wednesday Service:

Somber music, sermon, and imposition of ashes make this Ash Wednesday service a meaningful experience to start the Lenten season.



PALM SUNDAY

Sunday, March 24

10:40 am
Narthex

On Palm Sunday, we invite children and youth to participate in worship by parading palms during the Processional Hymn. Arrive in the narthex (Sanctuary lobby) and your child/youth will receive a palm with which to process down the aisle during the opening hymn of worship. They will drop the palms off at the altar kneelers and return to their seat. Parents are welcome to join the children in the processional.



MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

Thursday, March 28

7:00 pm

Sanctuary

Before we can celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday, we must participate in his last moments on Maundy Thursday. Join us for this somber service, recalling the days leading up to Christ's sacrifice on the cross. You do not want to miss this important mid-week service as we prepare for Easter.



GOOD FRIDAY PRAYER VIGIL

Friday, March 29

11:30 am - 1:00 pm (Drop-in)

Sanctuary

Good Friday marks the day on which the crucifixion of Jesus is remembered. It gives us a powerful message and a demonstration of God's unconditional love for all of us. Our sanctuary will be open from 11:30 am - 1:00 pm for prayer and reflection. We invite you to stop by during your lunch hour, as you are able. Please enter through the Welcome Center.



EASTER

Sunday, March 31

9:45 am commUNITY coffee

11:00 am Worship in Sanctuary

He is Risen! Join us as we celebrate the good news that by Christ's death and resurrection we, and all creation, are continually being made new by God's love and saving grace. We will gather together for commUNITY coffee and refreshments and crafts for children in Trinity Hall during the Sunday school hour followed by worship at 11:00 am. We invite everyone to bring live flowers to help decorate our Living Cross at the front entrance to the Sanctuary.





Lent



PANCAKE SUPPER

Tuesday, February 13

5:15-7:15 pm (drop in)

Trinity Hall



Usher in the season of Lenten Season together with a classic “Fat Tuesday” supper of pancakes with all the sides. The cost is \$5 per person, \$14 max for families. RSVP using the QR code or email Sarah Moseley at sarah.moseley@openheartsumcsc.org




YOUTH VALENTINE'S PARTY

Sunday, February 18

9:45-10:45 am (during Sunday School)

Room D6

We'll celebrate Valentine's Day during our Sunday School hour on February 18th. Middle and High School-aged students are invited to join us for cake, snacks, coffee, and Valentine's treats. Everyone is asked to wear red or pink. We hope to see you there!





Events



YOUTH SPRING BREAK COFFEE BREAK

Tuesday, March 19 & Thursday, March 20

10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Location information detailed below

In town for spring break? Join us for a youth group coffee break! Tuesday, March 19th stop by Bridge City Coffee on Wade Hampton Blvd or Thursday, March 20th at Coffee Underground downtown. Bring a friend, come grab a coffee and let's connect! Sarah will be there from 10:30 am-12:00 pm.



EASTER EGG HUNT

Saturday, March 30

10:00 am - 11:30 am (Drop-in)

Sanctuary and Front Lawn

Join us for a community Easter Egg Hunt the Saturday before Easter. We'll gather in the Sanctuary at 10:00 am for a welcome and quick blessing before heading outside to begin the hunt. We will have a designated area for younger children (pre-school) and older children (K4 and up). After the Egg Hunt, there will be crafts available for all ages. Drinks will be provided.

If you wish to volunteer with set-up, stuffing eggs, facilitating a craft table, serving drinks, etc. Please email Sarah Moseley at sarah.moseley@openheartsumcsc.org.

Exploring Lent

Observance of Lent is a journey of preparation for following Jesus. The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word "lencten," meaning lengthen and referring to the lengthening days of spring. As United Methodists, we observe Lent beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending on Holy Saturday. During these forty days (not counting Sundays) we are asked to spend time in reflection, repentance, fasting, and caring for others. Sundays are not counted in the forty days because disciples are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus through intentional devotional practices already, and they are sometimes called "mini-Easters."

SHROVE TUESDAY

The day before Lent is called Shrove Tuesday, which comes from the word "shrive," meaning presenting one's self for absolution of sins after confession as a way to prepare for the season ahead. Another preparation was to rid the household of rich foods, such as eggs, milk, and sugar, since plainer foods were eaten during Lent as part of a fast. An easy way to use up these specific ingredients was to make a batch of pancakes. Although United Methodists typically do not have have strict observances on Shrove Tuesday, we have held onto the tradition of eating pancakes together as a fellowship meal.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday marks the start of the season of Lent and the beginning of our Lenten discipleship practices. In the Ash Wednesday service, we come before God recognizing our humanity, repenting of our sin, and remembering who we are and who we can be. Ashes are imposed on a person's forehead in the shape of a cross by a pastor. The use of ashes demonstrates an awareness of mortality and an intent to repent. Traditionally, the ashes used are created from the palm branches of the previous year's Palm Sunday service.



PALM SUNDAY

Palms throughout history have been used to welcome kings by placing palm branches on the ground for him to walk or ride on as a sign of victory. When Jesus entered the gates of Jerusalem for Passover, he was welcomed with palm branches like a king returning to his city. But Jesus overturned expectations of a militant messiah or a conquering king, as he came into the city riding a humble donkey, bringing words of peace and the promise of eternal life. In observance of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, churches will use palm branches as decorations and will have children process with palms as part of the worship service.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Maundy Thursday is the first of the three days of solemn remembrance of the events leading up to and immediately following the crucifixion of Jesus. Maundy comes from the Latin word "mandatum," which is mandate. In Jesus's final moments before his arrest, he humbly washes the feet of his disciples and has a final meal with them, thus instituting the Lord's Supper. As they partake in the meal, Jesus gives them the mandate: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (John 13:34-35). The Maundy Thursday is a somber service, rich with scripture, ritual, and Communion, leading us up to the cross where Jesus died for our sins.

GOOD FRIDAY

The Friday before Easter on which the crucifixion of Jesus is remembered is called Good Friday ("good" being an old church expression meaning holy). It is a solemn and mournful day of reflection and prayer, as we reflect on our sinfulness and the lengths God takes to redeem us, including death on the cross.

EASTER SUNDAY

Jesus died and was buried in a tomb hewn of stone, but on the third day he rose from the dead and claims victory over Death itself. He promises to us that we too will be resurrected with him and be restored to God's eternal kingdom. Easter is an exuberant day as we sing "Alleluias" and shout "Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed!"

Worship Practices



THE TRAVELING CROSS

Throughout the season of Lent at Open Hearts UMC, you will find a gnarled and twisted cross about five feet high, parked among the pews. The cross will be relocated every week, giving the appearance that it is traveling. There may be some Sundays when you come to worship and the cross is in “your spot” or in your way. It is a reminder to all that we must view our lives through the lens of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, knowing we might need to shift our perspective.



VEILING THE CROSS

The brass cross on the altar will be veiled with a sheer fabric. The veil covering the cross offers an outward and visible symbol of the penitential nature of the season of Lent. The veil obscures our vision of the cross that shapes our worship and in doing so reminds us that our sinful nature can obscure our vision of God.

STRIPPING THE ALTAR

A ritual that is done on Maundy Thursday is “stripping the altar” by removing the brass candlesticks, the cross, paschal candle, and paraments (linens and cloth hangings used on Communion tables, altars, pulpits and lecterns). Stripping of the altar symbolizes the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples and the stripping of Jesus by the soldiers before his crucifixion. Following Communion during the Maundy Thursday service, the pastor and lay members will strip the altar and veil it in black cloth.

FLOWERING OF THE CROSS

The barren cross of Good Friday comes alive again on Easter Sunday with flowers that symbolize the new life that emerges with Jesus' death and resurrection. Congregation and community members are invited to bring flowers from their homes to decorate the living cross at the front entrance of the Sanctuary. There will be additional flowers to decorate the cross provided by Open Hearts UMC for those who cannot bring their own.



ABSTAINING FROM ALLELUIAS

One practice that congregations or individuals may adopt during Lent is to abstain from saying “alleluia/hallelujah” as a way of bringing solemnity to the season as well as exuberance on Easter, when we allow ourselves to say it again. “Such a practice can be a kind of fasting from “ecstasy” and ecstatic praise, as the hallelujahs lie dormant for six weeks before we again burst out in joyful and ecstatic affirmation of the Resurrection” (resourceumc.org).



PRAYERS AT THE ALTAR

The altar rail is open during the closing hymn for anyone who wants to spend time kneeling in prayer. If you would like someone to pray with or for you, a member of the Prayer Team will join you at the altar rail. As always, you may send the Pastor and Prayer Team your requests for prayer by dropping off a prayer card in the offering plate or prayer box near the office, or you may email us at CARES@openheartsumcsc.org.



Devotional Practices

FASTING

Fasting is a practice of abstaining from eating for a certain period of time as an act of devotion. If your health allows, consider choosing one day a week where you will skip a meal, only consuming liquids. When you feel hungry during that time, stop and pray for the world, church, and yourself. You may also consider donating the money you would have used on that meal towards a meaningful charity. You may also consider abstaining from a favorite food, hobby, leisurely activity, guilty pleasure, or convenience. For example, some people have fasted from chocolate, video games, golfing, alcohol, meat, social media, television, or going to the movies. Whatever it is that you are fasting from, fill that void with prayer, scripture, and other acts of devotion to draw yourself closer to God.

TAKING ON A NEW PRACTICE

Instead of giving something up for Lent, you may want to consider “taking something on” as a new devotional practice. Here are a few ways you can add to your day as a way of drawing closer to God.

- Add more prayer time to your day.
- Start a prayer journal, documenting what you are praying for and how God answers your prayers.
- Commit to a random act of kindness each day of Lent.
- Read a devotional book.



Symbolism

PALMS

Palms represent triumph and victory. The palm branches that are used on Palm Sunday to celebrate Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem before his death are then dried, burned, and ground into ash to be used for Ash Wednesday service the next year. The same palms used to celebrate Jesus are used to remind us of our own death, which in turn reminds us that through Christ we will be given victory over death when we are resurrected with him.



LILIES

Lilies are the traditional flower for Easter because they are shaped like a trumpet, reminding us of herald trumpets that announce the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the trumpets of heaven.

PURPLE

Purple is a color used in the church to represent penitence and invites worshippers to be solemn and remorseful. It is also the color of royalty and represents the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. During Lent, the paraments (the tapestries on the altar, pulpit, and lectern) will be purple.

BLACK

On Maundy Thursday, the chancel will be stripped bare of paraments and brass appointments to represent the stripping of Jesus Christ during his Passion. The altar, pulpit, lectern, and baptismal font are items that are too difficult to remove so they will be covered in black to hide them, just as Christ was hidden from us in the grave. The black clothes will remain for three days, representing the three days Jesus was in the grave, until midnight on Holy Saturday (the day before Easter).

WHITE

The color white is used on the holiest of days in the church. After a long season of purple paraments in Lent, followed by three barren days of black, the color white makes a glorious appearance on Easter Sunday in joyful celebration of Christ's resurrection.

Children's Ministry

NURSERY

Nursery is available during Sunday School and worship for children ages 0 to 3 years old in Room B-04.



CHILDREN IN WORSHIP

We want children to learn how to worship God too, so we have broken down worship in a way that is inviting to our littlest disciples. We have **Children's Worship Activities** in the narthex (lobby) and in front of the church behind the organ. We also have a special **Children's Message** built into the worship service so children can receive God's word too. Children of any age can come up to the message, and their adults can join them if it makes them more comfortable.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

After the Children's Message in worship, a volunteer will shepherd the children to the Children's Classroom (D-04), where they will hear a Bible story and do a related craft together with our caring volunteers.

GET INVOLVED

- In support of the Triune Mercy Center staff, our children's programs will be making cards of appreciation and support to be delivered alongside the meal our missions, congregational, and hospitality teams are providing on March 12th.
- Join us for the procession of palms at the beginning of our worship service on March 24th. Children of all ages are encouraged to meet in the narthex at 10:40 am.
- Mark your calendars and join us for our Community Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 30th! We will have egg hunts and crafts for children of all ages.

Youth Ministry

YOUTH IN WORSHIP

Youth are full participants in the worship service and even take on leadership roles, being liturgists and acolytes, and leading the Children's Message.

YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM

We are now seeking to build a team of adults and youth who will help plan our calendar and help coordinate events. If you are an adult or youth interested in planning events, mission projects, and any other activities for our youth group, please reach out to Sarah Moseley.

GET INVOLVED

- In support of the Triune Mercy Center staff, our children's programs will be making cards of appreciation and support to be delivered alongside the meal our missions, congregational, and hospitality teams are providing on March 12th.
- Volunteer with our Easter Egg Hunt! Contact Sarah to sign-up.
- Join us for the procession of palms at the beginning of our worship service on March 24th. Youth of all ages are encouraged to meet in the narthex at 10:40 am.

*For questions about Children's and Youth Ministry,
contact Sarah Moseley.*



Sunday School

9:45 - 10:45 am

COMM[UNITY] COFFEE (TRINITY HALL)

Free coffee is available during the Sunday School hour. On Easter Sunday, we will have a light breakfast and juice in addition to coffee.

NURSERY (ROOM B-04)

Nursery is available for children up to age three years old.



CHILDREN'S CLASS (ROOM D-04)

Children in 4K through 5th grade are taught from Cokesbury's Celebrate Wonder curriculum, which "engages children's natural sense of curiosity to help them understand God's love. It creates a safe environment for kids to ask big questions — helping them explore the Bible in ways that feed their imagination and encourage creativity."

YOUTH CLASS (ROOM D-05)

We want our youth to have a sense of ownership in our church. Alongside some generous volunteers, our youth have helped decorate and create their Sunday school classroom. Sunday mornings youth will have the opportunity to gather with adult volunteers to explore their faith. Throughout the season of Lent and through Holy Week we will be exploring the worship series "Depths of Love."



Sunday School

9:45 - 10:45 am

FRIENDSHIP CLASS (ROOM A-09)

The Friendship class is primarily composed of retirees and empty-nesters who study and discuss a variety of biblical topics led by rotating class members.

OPEN HEARTS CLASS (ROOM C-13)

The Open Hearts class is a mission-focused intergenerational class promoting engaged learning through a variety of skilled teachers offering primarily discussion-based lessons. They are partnering with Triune Mercy Center and United Ministries for their service projects.

SEEKERS CLASS (ROOM C-10)

The Seekers Class is an intergenerational class with lecture-based teaching. They are currently studying Methodism throughout the season of Lent.

NEW ADULT CLASS (ROOM D-04)

Our newest adult Sunday school class is an intergenerational class that is focused on acts of service. They are currently enjoying building community together through conversations and helpful projects around the church on Sunday mornings.



Giving this Season

While traditionally individuals choose to give up something during the season of Lent, others choose practices to add to their faith lives. This could be a pledge to join a new Bible study, be more intentional with daily prayer, or become more involved in new areas of church ministry.

Below are some opportunities our congregation will have to step outside of the ordinary with service this season.

UMCOR SUNDAY SPECIAL OFFERING: MARCH 10TH

On Sunday, March 10th, we will be taking up a special offering for United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

- UMCOR comes alongside those who suffer from natural or human-caused disasters – famine, hurricane, war, flood, fire or other events—to alleviate suffering and serve as a source of help and hope for the vulnerable. They provide relief, response, and long-term recovery grants when events overwhelm a community’s ability to recover on their own.
- This special offering will underwrite UMCOR’s administrative costs so that 100% of direct giving will provide relief, response, and long-term recovery services.



For more information on UMCOR or ways to be involved please visit <https://umcmmission.org/umcor/>

TMC STAFF SUPPORT

- Triune Mercy Center is a non-denominational church in Greenville that ministers alongside those in need. Their mission is to share Christ’s love by meeting physical needs and providing life-changing opportunities for the disadvantaged.
- The staff at Triune Mercy Center work with folks through some of the most difficult circumstances and are often stretched thin. In efforts to support the staff who tackle extreme crises, our SHARE, CARES, and Hospitality teams are providing a meal for the full-time staff at Triune on March 12th. If you would like to participate, please contact Lynne Shackelford or Bill Shell.



Triune Mercy Center

TMC STAFF SUPPORT (CON'T)

- In addition to providing lunch, we'd like to invite everyone to write cards of encouragement and appreciation to the staff for their hard work. These notes and letters can be dropped by the office or given to Sarah Moseley and will be delivered at the meal provided on March 12th.

For more information on Triune Mercy Center visit their website at www.triunemercy.org

COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT



- Support our Community Easter Egg Hunt by buying eggs or fillers, or volunteering to stuff eggs or host our Easter Egg Hunt.
- Our egg hunt will take place on Saturday, March 30th from 10:00 am - 11:30 am.
- To volunteer, donate, or get more information please contact Sarah Moseley at sarah.moseley@openheartsumcsc.org.

GIVE TO THE CHURCH

- We are a new fledgling church and have unique needs as we keep up with our fast-paced growth. If you would like to partner with us in making an impact in this community through discipleship, worship, and outreach ministries, please consider contributing financially to our ministries.
- You can give by phone by texting **OPENDOORS** to 73256. You can also support us by purchasing ministry supplies through our Amazon Wishlist using the QR code below. Thank you for your support and partnership!



GIVE VIA TEXT HERE



Meet the Team



REV. KAREN JONES

Lead Pastor

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SARAH MOSELEY

Ministry Coordinator

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JANA CLACK

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DR. TISH ONEY GABOR

Director of Music Ministry

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DR. ELLIOTT SMITH

Organist and Pianist



ALEX PAYNE

Facilities Staff



Stay Connected

VISIT US

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Church Office Hours:
Monday -Thursday
9:00 am - 1:00 pm

CONTACT US

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ISAIAH 43:19

“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

Open Hearts

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