

# Open Hearts

## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2703 Augusta Street  
Greenville, SC 29605



### Congregational Update

April 4, 2024

OPEN HEARTS

OPEN MINDS

OPEN DOORS

Beloved Church,

Greetings in the name of our risen savior, Jesus Christ! I hope everyone had an extraordinary Easter in celebration of the resurrection. It has been a wonderful Spring, and we are delighted about our growing ministries here. However, I would like to make everyone aware of a situation that occurred recently.

Early on Friday morning, March 29<sup>th</sup>, there was a break-in at the church by two individuals who stole some items that were not of great monetary value, as well as food from the Child Development Center pantry. We are grateful that the break-in did not result in vandalism and we lament, that there are individuals that are hungry enough to break into God's house in order to eat.

In an effort to be transparent with our congregation and to bring awareness of our stewardship of the building and the ministries housed here, I am sharing a few of our safety initiatives that are already in place or are in progress.

- The Fire Department recommended that we rekey all exterior doors so they can better service us in the event of an emergency, and that work was completed last Friday. We are moving to exclusive use of keycards for all staff and church members who need access to the building. If you need a key card, please submit a [Keycard Request Form](#). We audit keycard access on a regular basis, so if your card doesn't work but should, please let the church office know, and we will correct the error.
- We are continuing our work to keep our children and youth secure. You can help us create a community of care in two ways. 1) Everyone in the congregation is asked to attend the Safe Sanctuary training to be held after worship on April 14. Please register [here](#). 2) Starting in August, we will ask children and youth to be checked in electronically using Realm, our church management software. If you need

assistance getting a Realm account, please contact

[admin@openheartsumcsc.org](mailto:admin@openheartsumcsc.org)

- If you would like to serve on a security/safety team to help us regularly audit and address our needs, please let me know.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Property Committee, who have prioritized health, safety, and accessibility initiatives for our building so that we can continue providing meaningful ministries here.

I would also like to ask the congregation to consider how we may address food insecurity in our community so that no one feels the desperation to break into a church in order to stay fed. If you would like to volunteer at the Samaritan House, sponsor and/or steward a “Little Free Pantry” on site, or have other ideas that you are passionate about, please reach out to me or a member of our SHARE Team.

Do not let your hearts be troubled over this event, but let us press on in living out our faith with open hearts.

Your ministry partner,  
Rev. Karen Jones  
Lead Pastor

# SAFE SANCTUARY TRAINING

Sunday, April 14th

12:15pm-1:30pm  
Trinity Hall



Website : [openheartsumcsc.org](http://openheartsumcsc.org)



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