



Pastor's Corner:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:37-39

"Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Feed my lambs." . . . "Simon son of John, do you love me?" "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." "Tend my sheep." . . . "Simon son of John, do you love me?" "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." "Feed my sheep." John 21:15-17

And Paul in Corinthians 13:13 says, *"And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. . . . 14:1a - "Pursue love."*

At the very center of our faith is love, God's love. John 3:16 - *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son* God's love knows no bounds. God loves everyone. No exceptions. God's love is holy and perfect. This is the love which we humans are to strive toward and pursue.

Sometimes we get so caught up in the rights and wrongs of our beliefs, we forget that love is at the very heart center of who we are and whose we are. I have often heard from people who once attended church and now no longer do, say that church people are just mean. Brian McLaren tells of leaving the pastorate and feeling the need to find a church that would help him live a life of love. He needed sustenance, encouragement, and help in loving God, loving himself, loving his wife, loving his kids and grandkids, extended family, neighbors and especially people he might struggle to love - oh and loving the earth. He shares how one church describes themselves on their website:

It's probably important to start by making it clear that we're not the ones who "finally got the Bible right." Neither do we possess the secret to life, exclusive access to GOD or "Seven Steps to Satisfaction." We are, however, powerfully drawn to the person of Jesus, his teaching and even more so, his life. So we are experimenting, and failing, and building a community that collectively follows his Way; hoping, trusting and even doubting that it might seed something beautiful in the world. Namely; full and abundant life for all creation. We think the TRUTH about LIFE may just be LOVE and LOVE may just be the WAY.

They go on to unpack the above statement:

The way of Jesus is a lifestyle of holistic healing for individuals, families, neighborhoods and nations. To follow this way is the countercultural road of limitless forgiveness, radical acceptance, nonviolent peace-making, abundant generosity and sacrificial love. Salvation isn't a contractual relationship of filling in the right theological answers or behaving the correct way, but an ongoing covenantal relationship with our Creator. This understanding can move us away from religious systems as our pathway to God as we understand that union with God simply "is" because of Jesus. In this way, salvation is about your NOW life, not your afterlife. We mustn't confuse the Kingdom of God with the kingdoms of this world. God's Kingdom is power under, not power over; invitation, not coercion; service, not consumption. As a community of Jesus followers, we welcome all persons, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age, physical or mental capacity, education, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic or marital status. God doesn't cause suffering, but redeems it. And calls us to join the work of renewing and reconciling and redeeming all things. The future is open and full of possibilities. We must embrace the awesome role we are invited to play in it.

So when I ponder our Vision Statement, **Disciples of Christ sent to share God's love in our world** - the

images of the statements above are a fullness of what I see we can become. We are a loving church - no doubt about that. However, there is much room for growth. We are being called to be a school of love. It doesn't matter about our denomination, our musical style, or liturgical tastes; if we meet once a week, bi-monthly at a retreat center or daily online. Nor do our clothes matter, formal or casual, hip or unhip or if worship is traditional or contemporary. All that matters is teaching people to live a life of love, from the heart, for God, for all people (no exceptions), and for all creation.

Who specializes in teaching people to love? Who develops, teaches and refines a transformative curriculum of love? Who trains teachers and leaders who exemplify and teach the love that our world so needs? If our churches don't do these things, who will?

I look forward to seeing how God's church will grow into their vision!
- **Pastor Rebecca**

Wednesday Night Live!

6 pm – Supper in the gym for all, at no charge. Enjoy a great menu with fruit and/or vegetables, along with a little dessert. ☺

6:30 Children's choir practice for their spring musical. Prayer meets at 5:30, Adult Choir 7 p.m.

Upcoming Meetings (Social Hall):

Sunday, March 4th: Finance Committee at 5 p.m.

Monday, March 5th: Trustees at 6 p.m.

Sunday, March 11th: Church Council at 5 p.m.

Sunday, March 11th: Daylight Saving begins.

Move clocks *ahead one hour* before bed Saturday night.



Children's Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, March 31st at 10 a.m.

Come and bring a friend for snacks and fun!

Celebrating Easter:

Thursday, March 29th: Holy Thursday Service 7 p.m.

Friday, March 30th: Good Friday Service at noon.

Cold-dish potluck luncheon to follow.

****Food Group 5 set up and clean-up****



Easter Sunday, April 1st:

Sunrise Service at 7 a.m.

Worship at 11 a.m.

(Sunday School at 10 a.m.)

Asbury Hills Retreat Weekend - March 23-25

We'll leave from the church parking lot on Friday, March 23, at 6 p.m. Eat dinner before coming and please meet early enough to pack the bus beforehand. The cost is \$118 for any non-MYF attendees. (Includes meals and lodging.) Anyone doing the low ropes should add \$10 per person; high ropes, \$30. **Payments and permission forms are due to Catherine by March 12.** Make check payable to Gramling UMC.

Bring: rain coat, comfortable clothes, shoes for hiking etc., toiletries, pillow, bed linens, and a Bible. Group snacks will be provided for designated areas. All meals will be served by the Asbury staff in their dining hall. We'll leave from there Sunday morning after breakfast and be back by about 10:30 a.m.

Prayer List and Prayer Chain

Prayer- Praises and Concerns: Call Lin Fisher (864-420-6080) or Anne Carroll (472-9434) or email newsletter@gramlingumc.org and Lin will forward your request.

Are any in your community suffering? They should pray. Are any celebrating? They should sing praises to God. Are any sick? They should call the elders of your church and ask them to pray. James 5:13-14a

Assisted Living, Nursing Home

Jane Fisher - White Oak at North Grove
 Joyce Evington - Wesley Ct. Assisted Living
 Jean Johnson . Skylyn Place Assisted Living
 Rebel Brackett . Lake Emory Care
 Helen Burrell . Woodbridge Assisted Living
 Carl Lane . Clemson Downs
 Carolyn Brackett . Country Christian Care, Fair Play
 Barbara Runion . Golden Age Room 110
 Betty Jean Campbell . The Bridge, Hendersonville

Church: Gramling UMC

Pastor Rebecca
 Gramling Church Leaders
 D.S. Paul Harmon
 Bishop Holston

World: District One Schools/ administration, teachers & staff
 Immigrants/Israel/Iraq/US leaders/ SC leaders

Military and Civil Defense - Ed Hershberger

Family & Friends

Bryan Johnson
 Polly & Wally Harper . Ruba Nix
 The Bryan family
 Rev. Wayne Culp & family
 Ray Mosley . JoAnn & Hugh Foster
 Gene Parris . Cindy Riddle's uncle
 Donna Fowler . Paula Rhymer
 Kim Culbreth Rouse . Beth Edmondson
 Delia - Gloria Neely's mother
 Tammy Jones-Cynthia Woodfin
 Ann Henderson, Marvin Jones & Judy Vanadore . Wings
 Karen Harrison . Sarah Harrison's mother
 Kay Hensdale . Sandra Wingo
 Wayne & Nancy McAbee . Lin Fisher
 Bob Hoover . Mary Lou Ridgeway
 Barry Johnson . Tom Ramsay
 Ray Simcox . Bonnie Gramling



Happy Birthday in March!

2 Gwen Gramling	13 Audrey Woodfin	21 Joann Garner	25 Herb Sisk
3 Jeff Millward	18 Matthew Parris	22 Emma Friend	26 Ella Kate Rhymer
5 Mary Katherine Connell	18 Parker Gramling	22 Lenny McDole	26 Joe Carroll
6 Cliff Buff	18 Sean Cobourn	23 Gail Millward	27 Janet Blackwell
9 Daniel Allen	18 Vicki Fowler	23 Jackson Ellington	28 Bryan Johnson
11 Peggy Pruitt	20 Martin Gramling	24 August Carroll	29 Elizabeth Edmondson

2018 General Tithes & Offerings, week 7

Budget needed to date: \$39,595; Received: \$28,277

Electronic Giving Options:

GUMC now accepts **electronic donations through our website**, gramlingumc.org. Just click on "Online Giving," and you will be directed to a secure website to set up one-time or recurring payments. The giving site is run by Vanco, a long-established company who specializes in non-profit electronic giving. Vanco allows for a credit card payment or bank draft, and your account information is never seen by any church personnel. When giving by credit card, you have the option of covering the credit card company's fee if you like.

Another way to give electronically is through your bank's online billing system, in which you notify your bank directly and they then send us your donation by mail.

Gramling United Methodist Church

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Address Service Requested



Pastor Rev. Rebecca Wilkins

(want electronic copy only? e-mail newsletter@gramlingumc.org)