



United Methodist Church
OF GENEVA



genevaumc.org

MARCH 2021



the Messenger

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Lent...

The Christian season of Lent is the 40 days before Easter, not counting Sundays, which are considered mini-Easters. The word Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon *lencten*, meaning spring. Lent is traditionally a time for repentance, self-reflection, and recalibrating ourselves spiritually. Historically, it was also a time for fasting and for new members to prepare for their baptism. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday.

Today, Lent is known as a time for giving up things as well as for taking on new life-giving practices. It's a good time to practice spiritual disciplines such as daily scripture or devotional readings, daily prayer, sacrifice, rest (Sabbath), and serving others, in an intentional and concerted effort to grow closer to God in our faith.

Here's some things you might try this Lent:

Reading through the Gospels (see page 5)

Once a week, have a **simple meal** and donate what you might have spent on the meal

Try some different **ways to pray**: use prayer beads, a finger or coloring labyrinth, pray a Psalm, pray the Daily Office

Participate in a church **study group** (see page 6)

As a family collect coins & **donate** to Heifer Fund

Worship online every week

Read an online **devotional** like upperroom.org/devotionals

Simplify your life - how many ways can you think of to do this?

Find a safe way to **help others** - donate to a food bank or UMCO

Give up a bad habit and focus on being more positive

Read a book by using the UMCG **Amplify** resource (see page 6)



Pastor's Page

As I leave my role as UMCG Director of Communications, I am grateful to many people who influenced my faith: my Methodist grandparents, who faithfully observed Sabbath and presented church programs; Gloria Laubheimer King, Christian Ed. Director at Normal First UMC who gave me the opportunity to narrate the Christmas pageant from the pulpit when I was in high school; my third grade teacher, Miss Faye Mansfield, who taught me to write stories, poems, and plays; and my professor father who served on our church board and mother who did so much for others.

My thanks to God for this calling, for the opportunity to serve here and at Manhattan and Burlington UMCs, and for preparing me for ministry. I am glad that God has used my years in broadcasting and teaching college communications/journalism to help produce our weekly online worship.

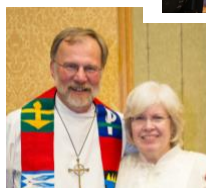
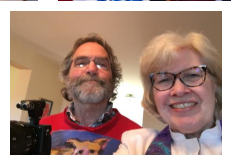
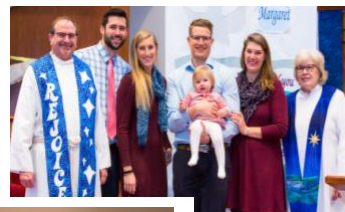
My deepest thanks to everyone at UMCG - for your support, friendship, and encouragement as I heard a call to become a pastor and served at UMCG teaching the 7th-8th grade Sunday school and confirmation class Praxis years ago. Thank you for your notes and cards of encouragement during seminary and ordination and as I've served as your Director of Communications. I hope I have helped you and our community know what's going on here at UMCG, celebrated your events and ministries well, and served you in a meaningful and faithful way through my teaching, preaching, and pastoral care.

A special thanks goes to my husband Tom - for his support, partnership, service at all three churches, his excellent work taking photos to preserve UMCG history, and for his dedication in editing our online worship this entire year. I am grateful for our family's support, and involvement through Youth group, confirmation, ushering at iWitness, and helping with the favors and set-up for a Lazarus House Thanksgiving dinner here at UMCG; and as liturgist at Manhattan UMC.

Thanks to Pastors Bill Obalil, Matthew Johnson, Rich Darr, Esther Lee, Lisa Telomen, and Mary Gay McKinney - what a pleasure to serve with such wonderful colleagues! Thank you to all of you in this congregation - I pray that God will continue to bless you and this church community.

I will still be involved until July with producing online worship, and hope to have time in the future to join you in groups and in worship. God Bless you my friends!

Pastor Becky



REACH UP...

MARCH 2021 Worship Schedule

Worship is held online at genevaumc.org & facebook.com/umcgeneva

Children's Sunday School – contact jcpoboe@msn.com

Youth Sunday School – at 11 a.m. via Zoom – contact denise@genevaumc.org

Youth Activities – contact denise@genevaumc.org

Pen & Paper meets Saturdays 6-9 p.m. online – contact denise@genevaumc.org

Adult Sunday School on Zoom 10:30 a.m. Sunday – contact mcjamesc@aol.com

Neighborhood Group study on Zoom at 10:30 a.m. – contact lisa@genevaumc.org

March 7 – 3rd Sunday In Lent/Holy Communion [John 2:13-22](#)

In the story of Jesus cleansing the temple, we come face to face with “embodiment.” In a context where the temple building in Jerusalem was seen as the center of God’s activity, Jesus “turned the tables” and pointed to his body as the real temple of God. In the incarnation, God chose to localize God’s love in a human body. As followers of Jesus, how do our churches today embody the love of God? How do we as disciples, embody the love of God? How are we and our churches doing at turning the tables on profit and privilege for some, to encourage God’s grace and blessings poured out for all? Let’s practice being this abundant love of Christ this Lent! *Have your juice and bread or premade packet ready to join in celebrating Communion.*

Pastor Lisa preaches, “Our Challenge: to Re-present God’s Love?”

March 14 – 4th Sunday in Lent [John 3:14-21](#)

Today’s familiar passage invites us to choose. Is God primarily a God of love or primarily a God of justice? Of course, the two can’t be totally separated. Love demands justice, and justice flows from a sense of love. The challenge is that while the two cannot be separated, neither can they be held as equals. Must God’s justice be satisfied by punishment as in the penal substitutionary view of atonement? Or does God suspend judgment and forgive humans out of love by grace?

Pastor Mary Gay preaches, “Love or Justice?”

March 21 – 5th Sunday in Lent [John 12:20-33](#)

Following Jesus is a matter of life and death. In other words, life and death are of central concern to followers of Jesus. In Lent we follow Jesus all the way to the cross. It is there, in the face of the world’s many ways of death (the pandemic, poverty, racism, economic collapse, hunger, sickness, refugees and war) that we are drawn close to Jesus? Paradoxically, in the light of death we catch a glimpse of life at its fullest.

Pastor Rich preaches, “A Matter of Life and Death.”

March 28 – Palm/Passion Sunday Selected verses from Mark 11, 14 and 15

We begin with Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem as he is greeted by a welcoming crowd, but his supporters abandon him one by one in the week leading to the cross. What does the Gospel of Mark say is the reason for Jesus’ death? Was it taken or was it given? How could this happen?

Pastor Becky preaches, “Why?”

*The content and ideas above are based largely on the blog *Working Preacher* out of Luther Seminary in MN. Homiletics Prof. David Lose and colleagues produce this useful blog.

UMCG Finance Update

Greetings and peace to you from the Finance Committee.

With January numbers in, we are off to a slow start financially, experiencing an operating deficit of several thousand dollars. Though this is typical for January, we all know expenses don't take a holiday whenever the calendar page turns. So, we encourage all members to be faithful and **consistent** in their giving habits. Through our regular giving, God will amplify our individual blessings and help us accomplish great things together. Consider just some of the things we are doing:

- Providing a vital children's and youth ministry that is developing exciting new approaches
- Creating inspiring, innovative online worship services through the work of our amazing staff and many volunteers
- Offering myriad adult fellowship and study opportunities via Zoom: 10 a.m. Sunday coffee hour, two 10:30 a.m. Sunday study classes, Tuesday evening Spirits & Studies group, Adult-ish young adult group, Spirited Women, Men's Early Bird Fellowship, Disciple Bible Study, and more!
- Giving dollars and direct service to Salvation Army Food Pantry, Lazarus House, Hesed House, NIFB, prayer shawl making
- Giving continued financial support to our mission partners in Haiti, DR, Appalachia, and many other places
- Providing congregational care through UMCG staff, Friendly Visitors, and individual members reaching out in love and prayer

What a privilege it is to share our "loaves and fishes" to strengthen UMCG and help our neighbors!

Rolland Lang, Chair of Finance Committee

UMCG Scholarships - Applications are NOW open!

Attention all high school seniors and college undergraduate and graduate students! UMCG scholarship [applications](http://genevaumc.org) are now open. Apply online at <http://genevaumc.org> under REACH IN. **The deadline to submit your application is April 16, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. No application will be accepted after that date, and all parts of the application must be received by April 16.** This year, the Scholarship Committee will accept unofficial transcripts. Please contact a committee member with questions or if you need help: Keith Worthington, Colleen Fasbender, Barb Pribble, Suzanne Zefron, or Gwen Powell.

UMCG Health Team Update

from Jim Alderfer

The UMCG Health Team has continued to meet every 2 weeks to review the current state of the pandemic in Kane County: we are updating the reopening criteria, as well as the NIC Absolute Guidelines Checklist in order to be ready should the conditions in Kane County improve to the point that we can open the church building for worship. Currently, Kane County is experiencing a significant improvement in the overall Covid-19 virus statistics and it's COVID risk level has improved to orange per the [CovidActNow](https://www.covidactnow.com/) website. While this is not at a level that allows us to reopen for worship, it is moving in the right direction!

The Health Team will continue to meet on a regular basis and review the reopening criteria against the current conditions in Kane County and Illinois, as well as actively working the NIC Absolute Guidelines checklist to ensure that when the pandemic conditions warrant reopening that we will be ready. In the meantime, we hope that everyone will stay vigilant in taking the precautions necessary to be safe and well!



You can still start...

Reading the Gospels During Lent 2021

The Reading Plan - by Jim Byrne

Once again UMCG is encouraging everyone to read the Gospels during Lent. Moreover, everyone is encouraged to respond to the challenge Jesus gave the Apostles: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). Invite

your relatives and friends to join in this important act of spiritual renewal and growth. Use e-mail, social media, the telephone, and even postal mail to send them copies of the reading program or to direct them to the UMCG Website where the program is posted. Form a reading group or recruit a reading buddy with whom you can share the reading experience. Links to the reading for each day are [here](#).

The following reading plan is offered as a guide to enriching your Lenten experience. Before you begin reading each day, **prepare** by clearing your mind of the distraction in your life so that you can focus totally on the Bible passage. **Read** silently or aloud with both mind and heart open to the message. When you finish, **reflect** on what you have read, on how it relates to other passages in the Bible, and on how it relates to your life. **Share** what you have read and your reactions with family, a "reading buddy," or a reading or study group with whom you enjoy fellowship face-to-face, by telephone, or by e-mail, Facebook or other social media. Most importantly, **pray** to God in thanksgiving and supplication, and **listen** in silence for God's voice.

Date	Scripture Reading
March 1	Matthew 25-26
March 2	Matthew 27-28
March 3	Mark 1-3
March 4	Mark 4-6
March 5	Mark 7-9
March 6	Mark 10-12
March 7	Join other Christians today for worship, study & fellowship.
March 8	Mark 13-14
March 9	Mark 15-16
March 10	Luke 1-3
March 11	Luke 4-6

March 12	Luke 7-9
March 13	Luke 10-12
March 14	Worship, study & fellowship
March 15	Luke 13-14
March 16	Luke 15-16
March 17	Luke 17-18
March 18	Luke 19-20
March 19	Luke 21-22
March 20	Luke 23-24
March 21	Worship, study & fellowship
March 22	John 1-2
March 23	John 3-4
March 24	John 5-6
March 25	John 7-8
March 26	John 9-10
March 27	John 11-12
March 28	Palm Sunday Join others for worship, study & fellowship
March 29	John 13-14
March 30	John 15-16
March 31	John 17-18
April 1	John 19-20
April 2	Good Friday John 21
April 3	Join others in a vigil awaiting Easter morning.
April 4	Easter Sunday Join others for worship to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.



Jeff & Rodney Telomen



Diane & Bruce Kelsey

Welcome new members!

REACH UP... REACH IN... REACH OUT...

We **Reach Up** to God in worship and spiritual development, **Reach In** to help and care for one another in our congregation, and **Reach Out** to serve others in our community and the world.

Adult Study Opportunities

For the month of **March** there are a number of online classes available. Please check the weekly eNews for the most current information. Here is what is being offered at this time:

Spirited Women will continue their discussion of the book, **Wild Hope**, by Gayle Boss for Lent on Wednesday mornings. For additional information about upcoming studies and a Zoom invitation please contact Jenean Larsen at jenean_larsen@yahoo.com.

The Men's study group, Early Bird Fellowship is meeting via Zoom each Thursday at 8:00 a.m. They will continue their Lenten study by James Harnish **A Disciples Path**. For more information and a Zoom invitation to join the weekly discussion, please contact Jim McConnell.

The Adult Sunday School Class is meeting each Sunday at 10:30 a.m., using Zoom. They will continue a Lenten study by Rob Fuquay, **The Passion Play: Living the Story of Christ's Last Days**. If you would like to join the weekly discussion, please contact Jim McConnell.

Spirits and Studies starts a new book on Tuesday evening, March 2, at 6:30 p.m. Peter Rollins is a Scottish theologian and speaker, noted author of several books. We'll be using his **The Orthodox Heretic**, a collection of short stories and parables that tend to turn us upside down. . . in a good way. Be in touch with Mary Gay McKinney @ marygay@genevaumc.org for more information. We order our books online. This one is also available on Kindle.

The Sunday Neighborhood Study Group meets at 10:30 a.m. and will discuss Jen Hatmaker's book **Seven** during Lent. The group will study Dr. Matthew Sleeth's book, **Serve God Save the Planet**, after Easter and over Earth Day. Please contract Pastor Lisa for more information and a Zoom invitation: lisa@genevaumc.org

Adult Council welcomes your ideas for studies and other areas of interest that you would like to see offered. Please contact Jim McConnell (630-715-3480) or mcjamesc@aol.com with any ideas or questions.

Disciple / Bible Study - The **Disciple / Bible** study, begun in January, continues to meet in 1-hour weekly Zoom gatherings, and is facilitated by Pastor Lisa and Tom Tamlyn on Wednesday evenings.

AMPLIFYMEDIA RESOURCES AVAILABLE Amplify Media is a multimedia platform that provides church congregations with all kinds of resources - books, studies, lectures, worship, and programs for everyone from kids to adults. Topics include antiracism/reconciliation, Women's studies, worship/inspiration, the Bible in 30 seconds or less, things for kids, and much more. **Here's how to log in to Amplify Media:**

Go to <https://my.amplifymedia.com/amplify>. You will need to create a free account.

Pull down menu and click on **Enter access code** - enter **GFJLWR**

Click the purple **verify** tab and create your account

Use our access code and your information and click **start a free membership**

Study Group Suggestions for Earth Day 2021

From your Creation Care Team at UMCG

Books

Serving God, Saving the Planet: A Christian Call to Action by Matthew Sleeth, MD (has DVD)
A Hopeful Earth by Bishop Sally Dyck
How to Avoid A Climate Disaster by Bill Gates
All We Can Save: Truth, Courage and Solutions for the Climate Crisis by Ayana E. Johnson
A Life of Grace for the Whole World by Jerry Chappel and Stephanie Johnson
Nature's Best Hope by Douglas Tallamy
Unstoppable by Bill Nye

Youth/Children

"Straw No More"
project
The Lorax, book or movie
amightygirl.com -
various projects by
young women & girls

Video Studies

"The Plastic Problem" available
through PBS.org
"Kiss the Ground" documentary
available through Interfaith Power and
Light
"Climate Truth" available through
billmoyers.com
"Serving God Saving the Planet"
(Matthew Sleeth study DVD)
"My Octopus Teacher" (Netflix)
Podcasts by Douglas Tallamy

PRAYER SHAWL GROUP - meets March 18 at 7 p.m. We welcome suggestions of folks to receive shawls and have some ready to give. Contact Pastor Lisa at lisa@genevaumcm.org to knit or crochet with us.

ADULT-ISH, the group for 18-30 somethings, meets the third Sunday of the month, from 1-2 p.m. on Google Meets. Email maria.isely@gmail.com for the link and join us!

REACH IN...

Children's Program



Photo: Children's Sunday School class made a video saying THANKS to all the Sunday School volunteers!

**Watch for our
Tri-City UMC's website
with Lenten activities -
coming soon!**

YOUTH

Contact: Denise Clementz, Director of Youth Ministry
at denise@genevaumc.org or 309-507-2328.

2021 is MARCHing on, or whatever kids these days say. Here's what the Youth Group has been up to:

Snowlympics



Cooking Lesson/Brunch



Hula Hoop Fundraiser - check Youth/Parent email for date (Tentative date, weather permitting)
Students will compete in hula hoop themed challenges to raise funds for a local non-profit.

We Need Your Help! Students- please vote by March 5 on our Doodle poll to pick the charity to which you'd like to donate the funds. The link can be found on the Weekly Parent-Youth emails or by contacting Denise. If you are interested in participating in the event (not a commitment, we understand your schedule may change) please contact Denise Clementz or Keith Rawson ASAP for more info.

We are also looking for donors to pair with students on this event. If you are interested, please contact Denise Clementz or Keith Rawson (ka_rawson@hotmail.com). We look forward to seeing you at our events and weekly Sunday School. See the Weekly Youth and Parent email for more details and the links for Zoom invites.
Or contact denise@genevaumc.org

Ministry Architects/Renovation Team Report

by Maria Isely

This past year has brought about many changes and challenges for the church, but the Youth and Children's Ministries have been able to overcome this adversity and grow even during these difficult times. A large part of this development is due to Ministry Architects, the Renovation Team, and the wonderful support of the Church community.

Our work began in June 2020, delayed for a few months by the passing of Jodi Borger and the Pandemic, as the Renovation Team met with Ministry Architects (MA) to discuss the future of the Youth and Children's Ministries. During our monthly meetings we addressed the challenges in our programs and started to complete tasks to lay the foundation we wanted to build on. Ministry Architects is a very structured organization - each task we do builds on the previous one which in the end strengthens, organizes, and improves the efficiency within our programs. For example, one main point that was noted during the listening session was volunteer burnout. To fix that problem, we utilized a 6-step plan created by MA to recruit a list of 70+ volunteers. From there, we compiled their information into a database so we could have a variety of different people to call on for events and activities.

Some other tasks that we have already completed are:

- Revised job descriptions for staff and volunteers
- Discussed volunteer training plans that will take place once in-person events can resume
- Searched through the Elexio database for all families with children and youth in our membership and had Children's and Youth Council reach out to every family
- Conducted monthly coaching calls with the Children's and Youth Directors to discuss ideas and schedules for future events.

Completing just these tasks alone has already resulted in our largest attended events in the past few years. In addition to these tasks, we recently held a Vision Summit led by MA where we discussed our concerns, hopes, and desires for the Youth and Children's Ministries. With over 20+ families participating (with and without children and youth), we were able to get valuable feedback about the future direction of these programs. With this input, we created a Mission Statement, Core Values, and 3-year goals for the programs which will be presented at the upcoming Church Council meeting.

What's next? The Renovation Team will continue to meet monthly with MA to complete more of our tasks. The next large event will be the Christian Foundation Summit which will be conducted this summer to discuss and help plan the learning objectives of each age level and how these might be accomplished utilizing curriculum, milestones, and special programming.

We have already seen great things starting to happen in the Youth and Children's Ministries and thanks to your continued support, this vital ministry will continue to grow and develop as the year progresses.

Thank you,
The Renovation Team

CALLING ALL GRADUATES!!

We'd like to extend our congratulations to those who have or will be graduating in 2021 from high school or post-secondary school. If you or a family member is graduating this spring, please contact the office at debbie@genevaumc.org, and let us know from which school they are graduating, as well as any future educational, work or other plans. **Please send your information by May 1.**

LAZARUS HOUSE DINNERS - UMCG continues to commit to providing dinners to Lazarus House Shelter on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month. Help stock our freezer by making an extra casserole in a 9x13 pan. **Contact Gwen Powell for contactless pickup.** Please do NOT take to the church. Contact Gwen at 630-262-7491 or bgaupow@yahoo.com. You can sign up on our website, too.

REACH OUT...

Missions Moment

The Missions and Church in Society committees want to thank you for all your generous donations in 2020! We take great joy in disbursing these monetary gifts to our local, national, and global ministry partners. The folks involved with these ministries are people we've gotten to know well. We communicate with them often and hear of how our gifts are making an impact. Good people are doing good work everywhere. How exciting that we as a faith community can be a part of it through our volunteering and monetary gifts!

In 2020, our Finance Committee and Church Council committed to tithing 5% of the general budget to our mission partners. In addition, many people gave generously to our Easter and Christmas offerings and special appeals. Because of your generosity, UMCG was able to give:

\$10,500 to Kids Alive Haiti	\$3,000 to Mutual Ground
\$5,900 to Kids Alive Dominican Republic	\$3,000 to Salvation Army
\$5,330 to Grace Children's Hospital in Haiti	\$3,000 to Suicide Prevention
\$2,500 to the Bishop's Appeal for a school in Tanzania	\$2,550 to Lazarus House
\$1,500 to Rebuilding Haiti Now	\$1,500 to CASA
\$7,000 to The Neighbor Project in Aurora	\$1,500 to DuPage Senior Services
\$1,000 to UMCOR	\$500 to Fox Valley Hands of Hope
\$500 to Doctors without Borders	\$500 to Bishop's Appeal for farmers
\$6,000 to TriCity Family Services	\$362 to Salvation Army Food Pantry
\$3,500 to Hesed House	\$50 to Northern IL Food Bank
\$3,500 to Justice for Our Neighbors	

The total giving to ministry partners for 2020 = \$63,192

Let's celebrate how God has blessed us and allowed us to be a blessing to others! If you have any questions or would like to learn how you can be involved in the work of these ministries, feel free to contact any member of the Mission and Church in Society committees:

Missions: Sharon Anderson, Cheryl Johnson, Veronique Saxe

Church in Society: Carolyn Sprawka, Gary Dittmer, Nancie Lillie, Catherine Byars, Gwen Powell, Heather Pleus, Kathryn Kaar, Pastor Lisa Telomen



UMC Social Principles written by Judy Burgess & other Spirited Women

Do you ever wonder what the official United Methodist Church has to say about abortion? Divorce? Climate change? The Spirited Women study group spent three weeks reading and discussing the ***Social Principles*** and came away excited about ways to put faith into action.

Here are some of the things our Spirited Women group had to say:

- In the Social Principles we find guidance to live in the spirit of Christ's teachings.
- I didn't know this document existed. I'm thankful it was updated in 2020.
- The language inspires us to join the call for social engagement. Words "we affirm," "we confess," "we support," and "we urge," are followed by reasoned explanations of why the UMC takes its stand.
- This would be helpful when people ask about our church's stance on difficult topics.
- Maybe we could focus on one social, economic, political, environmental issue in each newsletter.
- I'd like to know others interested in the social issues that challenge me the most.

We invite you to read the current ***Social Principles*** to join in this ongoing conversation:

<https://www.umcjustice.org/documents/124>



Thank You!

Prayer Shawl Group
Thank-you very much for
the beautiful prayer shawl.
I use it every night
when I say my prayers.
Sue White



A **BIG Thank You** to everyone who worked at our Food Drive/Styrofoam/Communion Packet Pick-Up on Saturday, February 27 - and all who came and brought donations!



Please join us for the
**Geneva United
Methodist Church**

Scholarship Fundraiser Tuesday, March 16, 2021

It's Easy and Fun! Present this coupon to your server, delivery driver or at the carryout window and the Geneva United Methodist Church Scholarship Fund will receive 15% of your total check.

Good ALL DAY Tuesday, March 16, 2021

only at the

Geneva Aurelio's 330 W. State St. 630-262-8440

Hours: 11am - 9pm

***Good for Carryout, Delivery or Dine-In!**

MESSENGER DEADLINE

Submit articles for the April *Messenger*

By **Saturday, March 20.**

Send information to: communications@genevaumc.org

United Methodist Church of Geneva

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