

April 2024



Malesus United Methodist Church

The Beacon

LET'S GO
FISHING

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So, they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead. (John 21:1-6; 11-14)

I am still celebrating the Eastertide season and I hope you are too. I know I can't stay camped here forever. In our scripture, Peter too, is trying to figure out what to do in this post-Easter season. He can't stand it anymore, tired of inaction, and decides to do what he knew best, go fishing! It sounds like a good idea, but when you read "the rest of the story" God has different plans.

For Peter, the post-Easter season was a once and for all away from the fishing business to the work of changing the world. The resurrection is God's call to the church, to go and change the world!

Easter Service 2024 is now history. It was a joyous celebration. What now? How long do we hold onto the joy and inspiration we felt on Easter morning?

The answer is, may we continue working together lifting a harmonious sound of praise to our risen Savior. God too, has world changing plans for us. God's plan is for women, men, boys, and girls to experience the hope of a risen Christ. Easter faith can change the world, let us share it with others! Thanks be to God.

Peace of Christ be with you always,
Pastor, Don

FINANCE REPORT

Financial Report year-to-date, as of February 29, 2024.

Pledged giving is at 87% of the budgeted amount year-to-date.

Unpledged giving is approximately 78% of the budgeted amount year-to-date.

Total income is at 87% of the budgeted amount year-to-date.

Total expenses are at 88% of budgeted amount year-to-date.

February Income: \$15,567.80

February Expenses: 16,285.15

Funds needed to date: \$34,596.00

Funds received to date: \$30,113.35



Our Weekly Stewardship

March 3 2024

Attendance

Sunday School 33

Worship 60

Offering \$6,494.00

March 10, 2024

Attendance

Sunday School 37

Worship 63

Offering \$3,890.00

March 17, 2024

Attendance

Sunday School 33

Worship 61

Offering \$1,384.00

March 24, 2024

Attendance

Sunday School 31

Worship 61

Offering \$2,701.00

March 31, 2024

Attendance

Sunday School 25

Worship 85

Offering \$1,978.00

Please note that the offering numbers above are a total of pledged giving, unpledged giving, and loose plate giving. They do not include designated gifts.



Communion Rail Offering

Communion Rail Offerings

Jan:	Feed My Starving Children	\$470
Feb:	Souper Bowl Sunday 114 cans of soup	\$255
March:	UMCOR - Admin. Costs	\$287
April:	Bemis "Room in the Inn"	
May:	Jackson Care Center	
June:	Project Peanut Butter	
July:	Reelfoot School Supplies	
Aug:	College Care Packages	
Sept:	TBD	
Oct:	TBD	
Nov:	Reelfoot Toys	
Dec:	TBD	



When you need...

Forgiveness

1 John 1:8-9

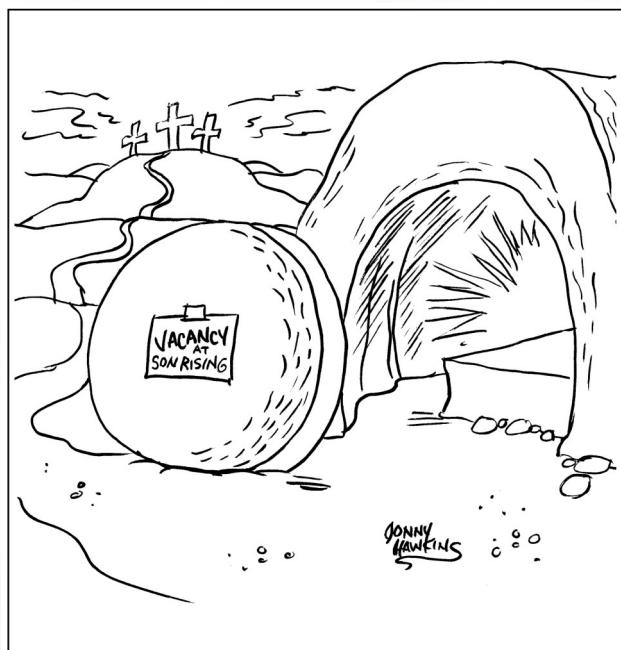
Matthew 6:14-15

Luke 6:37



Breath Prayer

Bless the Lord, my soul.



Mission News – April 2024

What is your church doing for others? What are YOU doing?

Our Communion offerings for -

April: Bemis "Room in the Inn"

May : Jackson Care Center

June: Project Peanut Butter

July: Reelfoot School Supplies

A big "Thank You" to all who participated in the "Feed My Starving Children" packing event. Our church provided volunteers and a \$470 donation. The entire event packed 388,000 meals, in 1,800 boxes, enough to feed 1,065 children for one year. Make plans to help out next year!

HANNAH'S HOPE: During the month of April and May keep all your change in our Hannah's Hope baby bottles. Hannah's Hope is a Memphis Conference program that provides hope and services for young mothers, families and their children.

BLESSING BOX: Our Blessings Box is being used on a regular basis. Leave food in the box on the side of the church, or leave it in the office. This is a way you can personally take care of hunger close by, and feel good about sharing some of our blessings. "Bring what you can, take what you need, but above all, be blessed."

PROJECT 20/20: Remember that we continue to save eyeglasses and sunglasses for next year's Project 20/20 and we are also collecting aluminum can tabs to send to the new Ronald McDonald House in Jackson. Bring them to the Missions Cart.

RIFA: Our next RIFA meal will be on Thursday, May,30. Thanks to all those individuals who are always willing to help.

As we continue to reach out to our community, keep your eyes and ears open. If you see a need, share it with one of your fellow church members---maybe we can take care of each other!!



Potluck Dinner

Wednesday, April 17th

5:30 pm

Bring your favorite dishes to share!



Women's Circle The Friendship Circle meets in the Fellowship Hall, at 10:00 am, on the 4th Tuesday, each month. The April meeting will be on Tuesday, April 23rd. The project will be cleaning the Sanctuary, so bring your cleaning supplies. Contact Sandra Atherton if you'd like to become a



Be sure to contact the office if you have an upcoming High School, College, or Masters graduate. We will be recognizing our Seniors on Sunday, May 12th.



Blessing Box

Please remember our Blessing Box . It empties almost as quickly as we fill it up. Any and all help is much appreciated.

Dear Women of Malesus Methodist,

Thank you so much for your donation to Birth Choice; I assure you that it will be put to good use! May the Lord richly bless you for your kindness to His unborn children and their young mothers.

Thank you for your beautiful labor of love, ladies!

Serving Christ for Life,
Christine Veteto, Clinic Director - BirthChoice



Thank you to those who helped me prepare the cinnamon rolls for this Easter's Cinnamon Roll Breakfast. Terry & April Charest, Brenda Powers, Janice Hutcherson, and Sheree', I so appreciate the help. I couldn't have done it without you.

Cathy Riley

Dear Malesus UMC Friendship Circle,

Once again, thank you! It was so kind of you to remember me with an Easter basket.

Much love,
Carol Young

Christian Symbol

VICTOR'S CROSS — Also called the conqueror's cross, the victor's cross is composed of the Greek cross, recognized by its four equal arms, adorned with Greek letters in each quadrant.



The top left letters stand for *Jesus* and the top right letters stand for *Christ* (the horizontal lines above them indicate that they are abbreviations). The four



Blessed Are You

The Beatitudes receive little attention, lamented novelist Kurt Vonnegut. "But, often with tears in their eyes, [Christians] demand that the Ten Commandments be posted in public buildings. And, of course, that's Moses, not Jesus. I haven't heard [anyone] demand that the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, be posted anywhere."

Jesus' Beatitudes have much to teach about selflessness, mourning, peacemaking and more. Jim Berger, author of *Being Sermon on the Mount Christians*, explains that those teachings were once "viewed as a mandate for the faithful." Post-Reformation, they became less law-like and more of a "liberating directive." Berger writes, "For Jesus, being and doing are inseparable. The Sermon is at once theory and praxis. It is not enough to read it or hear it. Jesus intends it to be how we live."

Welcome to Malesus UMC's newest member,
Mr. Jim Heidelberg!



Mr. Jim, grandson Luke, and Brother Don

Memories of March...



Grooming the Courtyard



Feed My Starving Children Pack-a-thon



Visiting Sweet Friends



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Easter Sunrise



So many opportunities for fellowship, service, and worship. See you in April!



It is time, once again, to get ready for the Bemis/ Malesus Showcase of Talent. So tune your guitar, warm up your vocal cords, and get your act ready for a fun night of entertainment. Don't like performing? Then show off your artistic abilities with your own creations. Did I mention culinary skills? Horray! There will be a potluck dinner, so bring your favorite dishes to share with everyone.

The Showcase and Potluck is scheduled for Wednesday, September 18, 2024, at 5:30 pm. We will have more information as we get closer to the event.

Call or Text:

Performers contact Loret Evans at 731-693-5282.

Visual Artists contact Martha Morris at 731-234-1995.

If your talent is too big to transport, such as cabinet making, sky diving, or training seals, then take a photo or several photos, frame it or put it in a small display and give it to Martha.

Participants need to contact one of the coordinators by July 30th so we can know what is needed to set up and get a performance program printed.

Any other questions, you can contact Susan Watlington at 731-695-4628. We look forward to hearing from you.

How Jesus Says Your Name

It's been said that when someone loves you, they say your name differently. Your name is "safe" coming from their mouth.

Mary Magdalene found this to be true. Walking alone in the dark to Jesus' tomb, she wanted nothing less than for a concerned loved one to interrupt her private grief, crooning her name in pity: "Oh, Mary, there, there." Or worse, someone from her old life who would spit her name like a curse, not knowing that Jesus had cast out her demons. But then Mary saw the tomb open and panicked, ran to get Simon, hurried back to the garden. Angels addressed her — not by name, just "Woman ..." — and then a gardener: "Woman ..."

Except then — "Mary" — this man knew her after all, speaking her name so knowingly, tenderly, lovingly that she recognized him. "Mary." Her name was safe in his mouth, her life safe in his care. He wasn't the gardener. He was her teacher, her friend, her Savior.



A recipe from...

Anita Sanders Cornbread

Preheat oven to 450°.

Ingredients

- 2 cups Martha White Self-Rising Buttermilk
Cornbread Meal Mix
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 2 to 2 1/4 cups of buttermilk
- 2 tbsp. bacon grease.

After oven comes to temp, heat a 10 inch cast iron skillet for about 4 minutes. After skillet is heated, add about 2 tablespoons of bacon grease and let that heat in the oven while mixing ingredients.

Bake about 15 to 20 minutes until done. Then set oven on broil to brown the top.



"Blossom by blossom the spring begins."
—Algernon C. Swinburne



General Conference Information

Join the General Conference TWK Delegation on April 9th at 7:00 pm for a live informational webinar. During the session, delegates will discuss proposed legislation and address questions from participants. The webinar link will be posted on the conference website that evening. To submit questions in advance, visit the General Conference Information page and use the contact form provided.

Go to: <https://twkumc.org>

Following the 'Perfect Fool'

Theologian Frederick Buechner, who died at age 96 in 2022, explored how the "foolishness of God" (see 1 Corinthians 1:25) compares to human wisdom. He pondered the safety stickers that warn, "The life you save may be your own."

"That is the wisdom of [humans] in a nutshell," wrote Buechner. "What God says, on the other hand, is 'The life you save is the life you lose.' In other words, the life you clutch, hoard, guard and play safe with is in the end a life worth little to anybody, including yourself, and only a life given away for love's sake is a life worth living."

Buechner continued, "To bring his point home, God shows us a man who gave his life away to the extent of dying a national disgrace without a penny in the bank or a friend to his name. In terms of [human] wisdom, he was a Perfect Fool, and anybody who thinks [they] can follow him without [being] something like the same kind of a fool ... is laboring under not a cross but a delusion."



Save the Date!

Saturday, April 13, 2024

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

First United Methodist Church

200 S. Church St. Jackson, TN 38301

***Evangelism for Non-Evangelists
from The Foundation for Evangelism***

Lunch provided.

Email delores.smith@twkumc.org to register

Dr. Heather Lear co-teaches the online course, "Evangelism for Non-Evangelists" with Rev. Dr. Mark Teasdale. In addition to being invited to teach evangelism courses at several UM Seminaries, she has also led workshops at the United Methodist Leadership Institute and various annual conference events.

Clergy and Laity, please make your plans to attend this event. The following books, "Evangelism for Non-Evangelists" and "Participating in Abundant Life", will be available (1 copy per church) for those who attend this event.



We wish to extend our deepest sympathy to Dianne Lively and her family in their loss of Clint on February 5th, 2024.

May they feel the love and prayers of their Malesus UMC family surrounding them during this difficult time.



The Joy of Jesus

The joy that Jesus offers his disciples is his own joy, which flows from his intimate communion with the One who sent him. It is a joy that does not separate happy days from sad days, successful moments from moments of failure, experiences of honor from experiences of dishonor, passion from resurrection.

This joy is a divine gift that does not leave us during times of illness, poverty, oppression or persecution. It is present even when the world laughs or tortures, robs or maims, fights or kills. It is truly ecstatic, always moving us away from the house of fear into the house of love, and always proclaiming that death no longer has the final say, though its noise remains loud and its devastation visible. The joy of Jesus lifts up life to be celebrated.

—Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Lifesigns*

Mighty Metaphor Machine

While moving to a new parish, Rev. Watt A. Hardworker lost his metaphor machine. His friend, Rev. Hesa Goodpastor, wondered how Watt could preach without metaphors. Another pal, Rev. Bloomingwhere I.M. At, remarked, “There isn’t enough skill in all of us clergy to preach week after week without some metaphors! The ‘Old, Old Story’ has been told so often that people tune it out without metaphors to help them hear it afresh.” He suggested organizing a metaphor collection to sustain Watt.

Hesa was open to the idea but worried that, with Easter approaching, Watt would be at a total loss. “What a catastrophe, especially starting out in a new church,” said Bloomingwhere. “How can the poor pastor possibly preach Easter without any metaphors?”

Hesa added, “No ‘butterflies emerging from the cocoon,’ no ‘awakening of daffodil bulbs after the long winter,’ no ‘flight of the Phoenix,’ no ‘resurrection as an image for a fresh start.’”



Superimposed Love

Maybe you’ve heard how salvation is like a total solar eclipse: God doesn’t see our sins because Jesus’ holiness covers them completely. Or maybe you’ve heard how trials can cause an “eclipse of faith.”

At WorldChallenge.org, Pastor Gary Wilkerson explains that in Greek, *eclipse* means “I am absent” or “I cease to exist,” because people once thought the gods temporarily extinguished the sun. “For Christians, a ‘spiritual eclipse’ is a dark hour when God seems to be absent from our lives,” Wilkerson writes.

Wilkerson points to Peter being sifted like wheat, Elijah and Jeremiah facing extreme discouragement, and David collapsing morally. Amid Satan’s attacks, “God seems completely absent,” writes the pastor. “In that dark moment of eclipse, the devil has created such chaos we can’t possibly see a way out.” During times of testing, Christians must cry out to God and trust his faithfulness.

Completing the eclipse analogy, Wilkerson shares Titus 3:4, the “love of God our Savior appeared” (NIV). The Greek meaning of *appeared* here is *superimposed*, he writes. God looks on our fraught-filled times of eclipse and “superimposes his divine love over us.”

He’ll be left with nothing to say but that Jesus arose from the grave,” Bloom exclaimed. “Just imagine!”

—Stan Purdum

When it Rains

The skeleton flower, a perennial native to Japan, has delicate petals that change from opaque white to almost transparent when wet. After it rains, only the flower's intricate, skeleton-like veins are visible.

When the rains come (and they will!) in our lives, the same can be said. Amid difficulty and struggle, our true selves often become more transparent. During a parenting challenge, criticism might emerge. Or while we tackle a tough work project, impatience might rear its ugly head.

Hosea 6:3 (NLT) proclaims: "Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring." The rains will come. Whether you're experiencing light rain or a downpour, ponder what the water reveals. Then ask God how you can be more open to his work in that area.

—Janna Firestone

Trustworthy Stewards

After making people in his own image, God entrusted them with the rest of his creation. He wants us to manage well our bodies, our minds and our earthly home. Consider these stewardship quotes from Christian thinkers:

"We ourselves are not masters of our own ability and knowledge. They, like our talents and health, are a loan presented for our use. We must live as people who know that such temporary possessions are not true belongings and that we must give account for our management of them."

—Albert Schweitzer

"Our God is not a God who discards what he has made, who is defeated by sin and evil. Our God is a redeeming God, a God who is determined to reclaim his fallen world, setting it free from its enslavement to corruption and bringing it to a final state of glory."


Sow seeds of kindness —
and you will have a perpetual
harvest.



?? ? **Bible Quiz** ? ?

What does the newly risen Jesus tell his disciples – twice – when he appears in the locked room where they are hiding?

- A. "Love one another as I have loved you."
- B. "Peace be with you."
- C. "The last shall be first and the first shall be last."
- D. "I am risen!"



Answer: B (See John 20:19, 21)



**Thursday, May 2,
2024**



Death Doesn't Win

In the final hours of 2021, a wildfire near Boulder, Colorado, destroyed 1,000 homes, including one belonging to Pastor Bill Stephens. His family,

out of town at the time, lost all their possessions. After months of feeling buried in debris, insurance paperwork and mourning, Stephens decided that Easter 2022 would mark a fresh start.

During worship that morning, the pastor shared a photo of vibrant daffodils emerging on his charred property. Burned remnants were visible in the background, just as Easter's backdrop includes the pain and death of Good Friday. But the empty tomb in Easter's foreground means death won't win, reminded Stephens. Even when earthly life "isn't all daffodils," we have hope and eternal life through Jesus.

"Spring shows what God can do with a drab and dirty world." —Virgil A. Kraft

Why Christ Calls Us to Worship

Easter services are usually well attended, but what about other weeks? What draws you to worship on an "average" Sunday, and what might Jesus have in store for people in the pews?

Consider this from Pastor Charles Aaron: "Did we come to church this morning thinking it was a safe thing to do? Did we come with some expectation of receiving a blessing, a bit of comfort, but no real challenge? Did we think about the possibility that encountering Jesus would rearrange our lives, explode our priorities, cause us to give more than we ever expected? Did we think we could get a little something from Jesus, a dose of grace to help us through the week? Did we come for the fellowship, the music, the spiritual boost? No one can argue with those reasons."

He continues: "The risen Christ, however, may have had other plans for this worship service. Christ may want to come under our skins and transform us. Christ may see through us so that something we have well hidden comes to the surface. Christ may kick out from under us the things we use to prop ourselves up but that we don't really need. Are we ready for that? Did we bargain on that when we walked through the door today?" —from *The Wired Word*

Jesus Answers Our Uncertainties

Thomas didn't believe the other disciples when they said Jesus had risen. The two travelers to Emmaus despaired over Jesus' death, uncertain what might come next.

During our life of faith, we all face questions, doubts and despair. In *Fearless*, Max Lucado says Jesus' responses to us echo his responses to the disciples. His answer to our doubt is the same as with Thomas: "Touch my body" — which we do every time we connect with the church (the body of Christ), wounds and all. As with the Emmaus disciples, Jesus urges us to ponder his story found in Scripture — which we do through Bible reading and study. Today, just as long ago, Jesus meets his followers — in his body, in his Word — and strengthens our faith.



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A Stephen Ministry Congregation



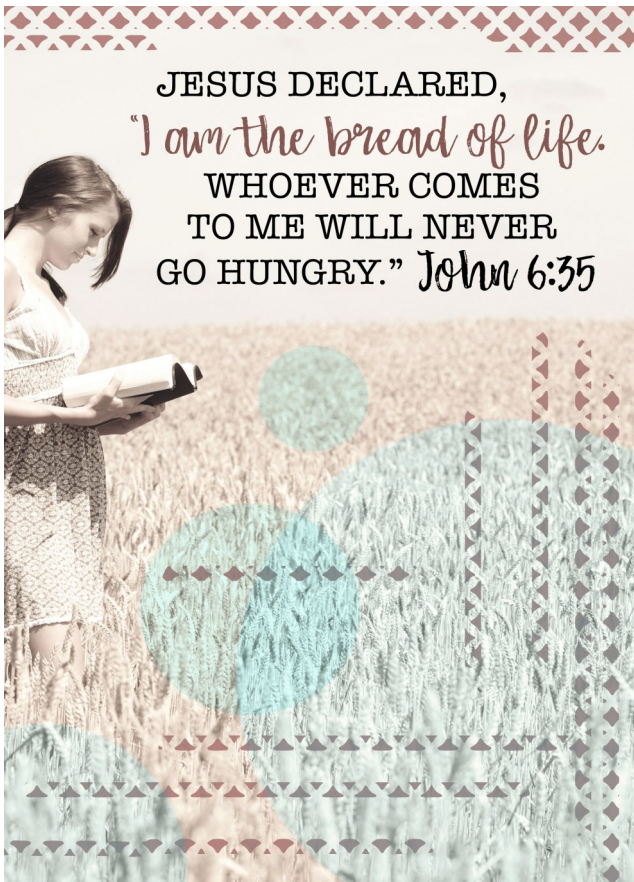
A Safe Sanctuaries Congregation



QR Code
for
Online
Giving

Our mission is to share the Gospel of Jesus
Christ by making disciples through our
service to our church, community, & world.

OR CURRENT RESIDENT



A Wakeup Call

God — let me be aware.
Let me not stumble blindly down the ways,
Just getting somehow safely through the days,
Not even groping for another hand,
Not even wondering why it all was planned,
Eyes to the ground unseeking for the light,
Soul never aching for a wild-winged flight,
Please, keep me eager just to do my share.
God — let me be aware.

God — let me be aware.
Stab my soul fiercely with others' pain,
Let me walk seeing horror and stain.
Let my hands, groping, find other hands.
Give me the heart that divines, understands.
Give me the courage, wounded, to fight.
Flood me with knowledge, drench me in light.
Please — keep me eager just to do my share.
God — let me be aware.

—Miriam Teichner