



Love in Action

The Newsletter of Maggie Valley United Methodist Church

Volume 16, Issue 4

April, 2023

FROM PASTOR COLE...

*Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the
Son and of the Holy Spirit...*

—Matthew 28:19

What difference will Easter make in your life? Seriously, think about that question for a second... Why do we make such a big deal out of Easter every year? Why do we spend 40 long days in Lent preparing ourselves? What is the point? What difference does it make in your life and in the lives of those around you?

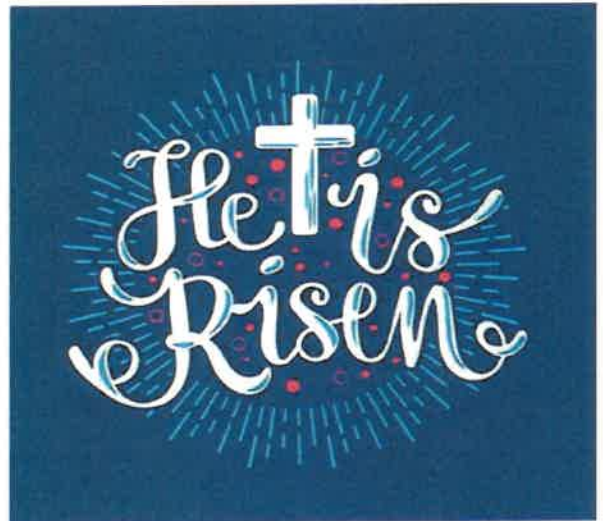
Of course, Easter is the central Good News of our faith. Without Easter, none of the work of the church is possible, none of this makes any sense. Easter is our very salvation. Easter is grace and forgiveness. Easter, Jesus' resurrection, is what makes our lives full and beautiful and worthwhile.

But I still think that question matters: what difference will Easter make in your life? What difference will it make again this year?

Often, Easter comes and we worship boldly. We sing beautiful hymns, hear Scripture proclaimed, we bring out all the "bells and whistles" to help everyone who comes feel the great news that "Christ is Risen Indeed!" But if this day doesn't change us — I mean really change our hearts and lives — then what is the point?

After Jesus' disciples found an empty tomb on the third day after his death, they met up with him in Galilee. Jesus decided (according to the Gospel of Matthew) to use this last opportunity to give them one final piece of instruction. He gave them what we call today the "Great Commission," the verse quoted above (Matthew 28:19). He tells his disciples that the last few years of following him have been training for what is to come, what was happening right then. They were to go out into all the world and "make disciples" of other people now.

That word, "disciple," is a word we use a lot in church, so it may have lost some of its meaning for us. It literally means to follow, to learn, to engage in a way of life. What Jesus was telling his disciples and I think us too, is that we are called to believe in this great news that Christ died and was resurrected for all people. So that all people might know love. So that those who are



hurting will hurt no more. So that those who are hungry will be fed. So that those who are in need will never want again. To be a disciple is to make a difference in the lives of those around us.

John Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, once said this: "The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness. Faith working by love, is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection."

For Wesley, Easter was an opportunity to celebrate the central part of our faith: that even the worst thing that can happen on earth (death), is not the end. But Wesley also implores us to believe that Easter is not just a celebration, but a call to get busy. It's a call to action. It's a call to love with boldness. It's a call to see the hurt and want and need all around us, then do something about it.

So what are you going to do? What difference will Easter make in your life this year? I mean that to be a serious question, not a rhetorical one. What are you going to do because of Easter this year? If you've accepted the love of God into your life, how is God calling you to be a disciple and to make disciples of others? How does God want to use your specific gifts and graces to make a difference in the world?

I've included some blank lines below for you to write out some ideas. I pray you will dream with God's calling in mind. I pray you will hope for the world around you and write down ways you believe you can be part of making disciples, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, loving *everyone* you meet. Then, let's get to it. Let's get to work together! Let's keep leaning into our mission as a church, *Knowing Christ. Growing Faith. Serving Others*, remembering that this is only possible ***because*** of Easter.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Cole

Holy Week & All Those Services...

Can you believe that "Holy Week" is already upon us? Starting with Palm Sunday on April 2nd, we will have 5 services of worship in 7 days!! So, what is with all the services? Why should you consider going to each one? Here is a quick reminder about what each service represents:

Palm Sunday (10:30am) — On Palm Sunday we wave branches remembering and celebrating Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. Kings in times past had ridden an unused donkey to symbolize peace for the nation. We remember that Jesus' entry then — and as we remember it now — as a sign of eternal peace for us all. This Sunday we will wave branches and shout "Hallelujah" just as the people in Jerusalem did some 2000 years ago.

Maundy Thursday (6pm)— This day of worship remembers Jesus' "Last Supper" with his disciples, where we get much of the theology and liturgy for Holy Communion today. This evening is set aside for us to make space in our lives to appreciate Christ's redeeming love for us. We will celebrate Holy Communion as a way of preparing ourselves for the rest of this week.

Good Friday (6pm) — It would be easy to skip from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday but spending an evening of quiet remembrance prepares our whole lives to embrace the redeeming, transforming love of God in Jesus. On Good Friday we remember Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, suffering, death, and burial. On this evening we will participate in a *Tenebrae* service (which is Latin for "shadows" or "darkness"). This powerful service starts with full light, but by the end of the service the altar is bare, and the lights have been put out. It is a poignant reminder of Christ's offering of love for all humanity — then and still today.

Sunrise Easter (7am) — The tradition of celebrating Easter outside and as the sun rises pairs well with the Good Friday service. The Good Friday service will end in darkness, so this one begins. But just as the death of Jesus is not the last thing for us, the darkness does not stay that way. By the end of the sunrise service, we are left standing in full sunlight and feeling the warmth it brings. Similarly, Easter represents a step out of darkness in sin and into light in God's grace. We will sing songs, hear Scripture and celebrate the miraculous and never-ending love of God as we celebrate Christ's resurrection! There will be a separate sermon and order of worship for this service and the 10:30am Easter service.

Easter (10:30am) — "Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!" Those classic lines sum up what we celebrate on Easter: Christ is risen, indeed! This is the center of our faith and deserves all the extravagant celebration we often give this Sunday. Worship will be jubilant and encourage us all to shake off the dust of the Lenten experience and lean into the full resurrection power and love of God for all people.



Holy Week

ANNOUNCEMENTS...

Don't forget that **Holy Week** is coming up. **Our Maundy Thursday Service will be on April 6th at 6:00pm, Good Friday Service on April 7th at 6:00pm, Easter Sunrise Service in the Garden by the Cross at 7:00am and finally, Easter Sunday Service at 10:30am in the sanctuary.**

"Sacred Seeing" is a way of seeing the world with the eyes of the heart. If I'm being honest, that sounds like something that may be hard to do or only for "really spiritual" people (whatever that means), but it's a practice I hope we can all try! **We will meet on Tuesday, April 4th at 7:30am in the Fellowship Hall.**

Our **Easter Egg Hunt** will be on Saturday, April 8th, at 12:00 noon. We do not need plastic eggs, but we are requesting bags of **individually wrapped candy** which can be dropped off at the office. **We will fill eggs on Thursday, April 6th, at 10:30 in the Fellowship Hall.** Help is also needed hiding eggs at 10:00 on Saturday morning and serving refreshments after the hunt. Please check the sign-up sheet in the lower entrance, or feel free to call Wanda Messer (734-7848) if you can help with this fun event!

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, April 10th.

Please note the date change. - The UMW will meet on Thursday, April 13th at 2:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. All women are invited.

We will have "Fun in the Sun" day immediately after worship on April 16th at the barn. Please be on the lookout for signup sheet to bring a side or dessert.

We will NOT have Pastor Cole's Bible Study on Thursday, April 13th. We will return on Thursday, April 20th at 9:00am.

Greetings in Christ! We are looking forward to an amazing Easter season at MVUMC. One of the highlights is **Easter Sunday Choir**. You are invited and encouraged to joyfully sing along with the Easter Choir! If you are interested in joining the choir, please call Lillianne Chamberlin at 407.506.8801.

The One Board will meet on Tuesday, April 18th at 6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall.

There are two opportunities each month for men to gather. The Men's Group will meet in the Daisy Classroom at 5:30pm on Thursday, April 20th. The men's breakfast will meet on April 29th at 8:00am in the fellowship hall.

All **"Love In Action"** articles are due to Belinda by **Monday, April 24th.**

The youth group will meet on April 26th at 6:00pm in the library. If you can provide a meal in May, please call Belinda to sign up.

There is choir practice every Sunday morning at 10:00am. All are welcome.

Our Church Food Pantry operates on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00am until noon. We are asking that everyone in the congregation **bring LIGHT or SUGAR FREE FRUIT, INSTANT OATMEAL, JELLY, COOKIES, and CANNED CHICKEN this month.** Personal hygiene items are appreciated also. Thank you for helping!

BELINDA MARR, TREASURER'S REPORT...

Monthly Financial Report for February 2023

February		
Needed for Budget	\$	\$23,882.98
Expenses	\$	\$31,485.04
Offerings	\$	\$34,353.55
Over/Under	\$	\$2,868.51



Treasurer Report

PRAYER CONCERNS...

Our Congregational Care Group meets once a month to update the list. The list will change monthly. If you know someone who needs to be added to the list or needs to remain on the list more than a month, please contact Belinda. Please pray for those below and send them a card if you would like to.

General Prayers:

Lucia Amoralli, Sherry Armstrong, Brennan, Mike & Amanda Balazy, Debra Balazy, Donna Brailsford, Beth Brown, John Burton, Kathy Cascioli, Todd Golf, Justin Dotson, Amy Drage, Vickie Dykhuizen, Grace Heger, Emberleigh Howell, Anthony King, Callie & Tice Konine, Rhianna Langlais, Kelsey Jo McDermott, Jackie Miner, Jim Murtaugh, Ray Noas, Neil Napolitano, Jim Neely, Brenda O'Keefe, Dave Pickens, Lisa Rhoden, Bonnie Romaine, Gene & Shirley Saxton, Claire Stoeckel, Nat Sutton, Pat Thompson, Paula Vogt, Matthew & Carrie Wannamaker, Tom Wilson



Congregational Care Team

Those in hospital and/or surgeries:

Patricia Burton, Robert Damico

Homebound/Nursing Home:

Becky Bender, Lady Hughes- Maggie Valley Nursing & Rehab,
Gail Pace- Silver Bluff, Phyllis Jackson- Smoky Mtn Nursing Home, Clarissa Fisher-Florida
Kathryn Brannen, Willard Dockery, Joe & Helen Duke, Brenda Griswold, Jeanette Miller, Dave
Pickens, Charlie & Rena Upright, David Wagner

This month please be in prayer for Haywood County, especially those families that will be impacted by the closing of Evergreen Paper.



April

2023

March		May															
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S				
				1	2	3	4					1	2	3	4	5	6
5	6	7	8	9	10	11		7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18		14	15	16	17	18	19	20			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25		21	22	23	24	25	26	27			
26	27	28	29	30	31			28	29	30	31						

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26 Connections Sunday School (9:15am) — Grace Room Worship (10:30am)	27 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30pm)	28 Food Pantry (10-12) Bible Study (6-7:30pm) — Grace Classroom	29 Food Pantry (10-12) Bible Study (6-7:30pm) — Grace Classroom	30 Pastor's Bible Study (9am) — Fellowship Hall UMW (2pm) — Fellowship Hall	31 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	1 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall
2 Connections Sunday School (9:15am) — Grace Room Worship (10:30am)	3 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30pm)	4 "Sacred Seeing" (7:30am) — Parking Lot	5 Food Pantry (10-12) Bible Study (6-7:30pm) — Grace Classroom	6 Pastor's Bible Study (9am) — Fellowship Hall Preparing Eggs (10:30am) Maundy Thursday Service (6pm) — Sanctuary	7 Good Friday Service (6pm) — Sanctuary Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall Put up Easter Scene (2pm)	8 Easter Egg Hunt (12pm) — Backyard/ Fellowship Hall
9 Easter Sunday! Sunrise (7am) Connections Sunday School (9:15am) — Grace Room Worship (10:30am)	10 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30pm)	11 One Board Meeting (6pm) — Fellowship Hall	12 Food Pantry (10-12)	13 UMW Meeting (2pm) — Fellowship Hall	14 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	15 Men's Breakfast (8am) — Fellowship Hall Earth Day Cleanup & More (10am) — Fellowship Hall
16 Connections Sunday School (9:15am) — Grace Room Worship (10:30am) — Barn	17 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30pm)	18 Food Pantry (10-12) Youth Group (6-7:30pm) — Library Hall	19 Food Pantry (10-12) Youth Group (6-7:30pm) — Library Hall	20 Pastor's Bible Study (9am) — Fellowship Hall Men's Group (5:30pm) — Grace Classroom	21 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	22 Men's Breakfast (8am) — Fellowship Hall Earth Day Cleanup & More (10am) — Fellowship Hall
23 Connections Sunday School (9:15am) — Grace Room Worship (10:30am)	24 Food Pantry (10-12) Shepherd's Table (3:30pm)	25 Food Pantry (10-12) Youth Group (6-7:30pm) — Library Hall	26 Food Pantry (10-12) Youth Group (6-7:30pm) — Library Hall	27 Pastor's Bible Study (9am) — Fellowship Hall	28 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall	29 Grace Bible Study Class (9:30am) — Fellowship Hall

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES...

HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAYS!

2	Jerri Collins	16	Miki Braley McPherson
3	Wanda Shoemaker	17	Suewayne Adkins
3	Cynthia Williams	17	Taylor Ross
5	Trudy Hall	18	Selena Williamson
5	Gloria Teeter	19	Lillianne Chamberlin
7	Jennifer McCall	20	Sam Rodgers
10	Pat Butler	22	Wendy Bowen
11	Ann Duncan	24	Susan Warner
12	Lois Oehme	27	Zachary Moore
12	Sammy Sutton	30	John Hinton
13	Gene Saxton	30	Pete Planchock
15	Nathan Duncan	30	Mike Szittai
15	Tyla Oellerich		

HAPPY APRIL ANNIVERSARY!

1	Pat & John Burton (1999)
14	Gail & Mike England (1979)
26	Tina & Herman Oellerich (1981)







WCU PARTNERSHIP...

Did you know that we partner with Western Carolina University's Wesley Foundation each year? Twice a year we take a meal and deliver it to the Methodist College Group that meets each week on campus. Through this partnership we are investing in the lives of young people.

Jay Hinton, a Campus Minister and leader of WCU's Wesley Foundation, and Pastor Cole are exploring more ways we can strengthen this partnership. If you or someone you know would like to get involved in the existing food ministry or in ministries that may unfold in the coming months, please contact Pastor Cole. Let us all be involved through our prayers and love for these students who are navigating an ever-changing world and are in need of our support.

One way you can be involved this year is by joining us for the Wesley Foundation Golf Classic on April 29th at Lake Junaluska. Spaces are limited, but if you play golf and are interested in joining one of the 2 teams we will have this year, please contact Pastor Cole.



PRAYER, HEALING, CELEBRATION, AND COMMUNITY...

One of the most sacred parts of my job as your pastor is being with you in "threshold" moments of life. *Threshold* is an important word and an even more important idea. Throughout our lives we are constantly crossing, approaching, leaving behind, thresholds. We experience this as we retire, take a new job, the birth of kids and grandkids, during illness, death, retirement and so much more. All are crossings from one place to another.

We should not face these thresholds alone. All throughout Scripture there are invitations for us to cross these sacred, hard, beautiful moments together. I am lifting up thresholds because I want to invite you to cross whatever place you are at within a community.

Are you sick? Call me. Let me come to you and anoint you with oil. Are you about to retire? Let us celebrate and pray a blessing over you. Did you move to a new house/apartment? Let us come and bless your new home so that you may feel love, joy, peace and security where you sleep.

The point is, whatever you are going through, do not go through it alone. Let us walk through these thresholds together. Let us pray, ask for healing, ask for blessings, celebrate and live more fully into the love of God that is made more visible when we walk together.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Cole



EARTH DAY- APRIL 22...

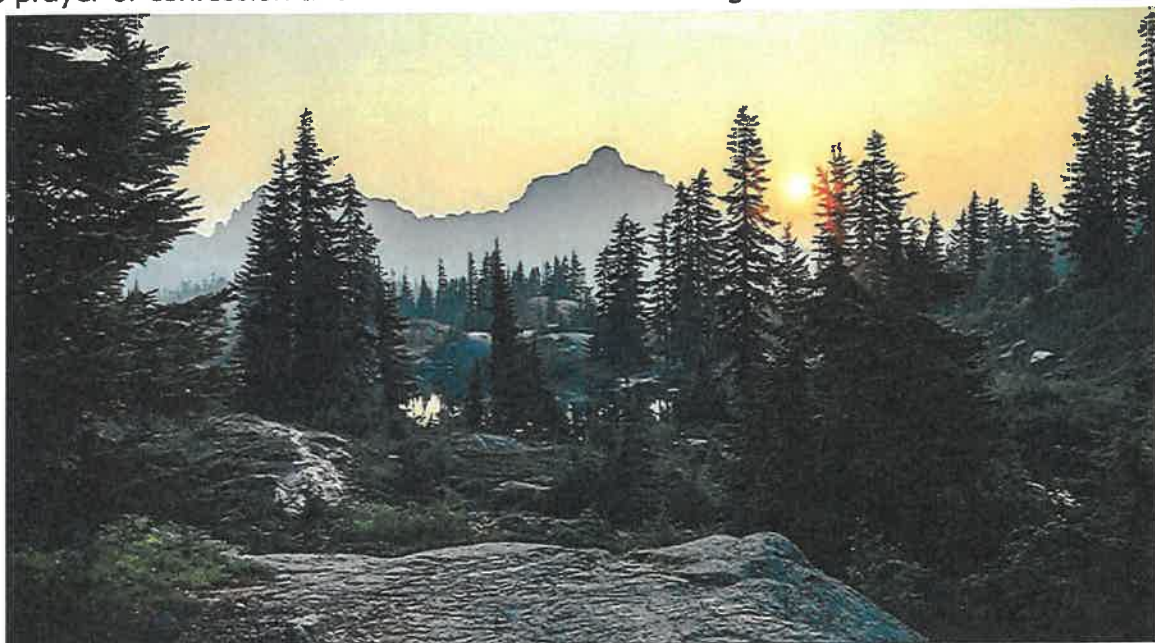
Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants too." Every living thing on this planet is God's according to Psalm 24. Psalm 8 reminds us that God has given us the responsibility to take care of it. If we look around at the shrinking habitat for animals, the ever-warming of the planet, the out-of-control pollution all around us, when we look at that, I'm not sure we've been doing a good job at caring for what God has wonderfully made.

There are 2 opportunities for you to participate in Earth Day this year. First, on Saturday, April 22nd, you are invited to join us as we take a step towards tending to this beautiful land. On that day we will have a number of activities for you to make a difference in the world right here. These will be small steps, but as Mother Teresa reminds us, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." And that is a start. That is enough for God to use and multiply and heal this land.

Second, on April 23rd in worship we will consider what it means to be people of God who live in harmony with the natural world all around us. Consider reading Psalm 8 and Psalm 24:1 before you come to worship.

As you prepare to join us on April 22nd and 23rd, please be in prayer for our world. Perhaps you can start with this prayer of confession and trust as we tend to this magnificent world:

*O God, maker
of heaven and
earth, of all
that is, seen
and unseen:
You place us in
your creation,
and you
command us to
care for it.
Your works
declare glory
and splendor,
and you call us
to praise and
reverence.
Where we have
degraded or*



*destroyed earth's bounty, forgive us.
Where we have taken beauty and majesty for granted, have mercy upon us.
Where we have become estranged from the creatures with whom we share this planet,
grant us your peace.
Renew us in the waters of baptism,
refresh us with the winds of your spirit,
and sustain us with the bread of life.
In the name of Jesus Christ, and for the sake of the new creation, we pray. Amen.*

Prayer by Bishop Ken Carter, "Earth Day Confession."

Maggie Valley UMC Worship Services 10:30 am

4192 Soco Road

Maggie Valley, NC 28751

Office Phone (828) 926-8036

Fax (828) 926-3932

belinda@maggieumc.org

Rev. Cole Altizer, Pastor - Cell (828) 577-9906

Rev. Mike Shirley

Vacant, Pianist & Choir Director

Janice Rogers, Organist

Belinda Marr, Administrative Assistant/Treasurer

"Knowing Christ, Growing Faith, Serving Others"

Maggie Valley United Methodist Church

"LOVE IN ACTION" Newsletter

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