

# Wesley Grove Messenger

April 2023

## My Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Blessings to All of You!

Have you ever heard of the “Blessing of the Throats?” I hadn’t. Not until a recent visit with Mary Rita Smith (that’s Mary Jo’s mother) this past Ash Wednesday. Mary Rita was raised Catholic, and she recounted to me not only the importance of the “Blessing of the Throats” in her own upbringing, but also her own involvement in sharing this ritual with others. It is ordinarily celebrated on February 3, the Feast Day of St. Blaise (*also spelled Blase*), who was said to have saved a boy from choking on a fish bone. Since the 8<sup>th</sup> Century, this physician turned bishop has been invoked on behalf of the sick, especially those afflicted with illnesses of the throat. If you were to be a part of this ritual today, a priest would touch each side of your throat with two candles that were blessed on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (January 2) and joined together with a red ribbon (a symbol of martyrdom) in the form of a cross. The priest would then make the Sign of the Cross while saying the following blessing: *“Through the intercession of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from every disease of the throat and from every other illness. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”*

I have never participated in a “Blessing of the Throats,” but it sounds like a great idea to me. After all, our throats are very important to us. The throat, also called the pharynx, is a muscular, funnel-shaped passageway inside the body that connects the mouth and nose to the esophagus (which leads to the stomach) and to the larynx (which leads to the trachea and then the lungs). So the throat is part of both the respiratory system and the digestive system. It carries air, food, and fluids down from the nose and mouth. The pharynx is the site of many common illnesses, including sore throats and tonsillitis. And given the crazy weather we’ve had this past winter, it certainly wouldn’t hurt to pray for each other’s throats!

But here’s the other thing I was thinking about. The throat also helps in forming speech. And, oh my, if you’re anything like me, it certainly couldn’t hurt to have your words blessed! What we say is important, and, if our throats were blessed, we might become more mindful of what we say and when and how we say our words.

Our throats also sing forth praise to God. As we move from Lent to Easter, we will sing, pray, and hear the word, “alleluia,” over and over again. Alleluia means simply, “All hail to the One who is.” It is the ultimate expression of thanksgiving, the acme of human joy. It says that God is good, and we know it! During this season of alleluias, let us consider a couple of questions: What if our throats have been blessed to sing God’s praises all the days of our lives? What if life itself was meant to be one long alleluia moment? No matter what our religion, we would do well to ask the Lord to bless our throats and pray that our words might lift up rather than tear down.

So as the alleluias of Easter approach, may your throat be blessed, may my throat be blessed, and may our lives sing forth praises as we celebrate one long alleluia moment!

In Easter joy,  
Pastor Karen



## Lectionary Readings

**April 2, 2023**

***Palm Sunday***

Isaiah 50:4-9A  
 Psalm 31 or 118  
 Philemon 2:5-11

Matthew 21:1-11 or 26:14 — 27:66



**April 6, 2023**

***Mundy Thursday***

Exodus 12:1-14  
 Psalm 116  
 1 Corinthians 11:23-26  
 John 13:1-17, 31b-35

**April 7, 2023**

***Good Friday***

Isaiah 52:13—53:12  
 Psalm 22  
 Hebrews 10:16-25  
 John 18:1—19:42



**April 9, 2023**

***Easter Sunday***

Jeremiah 31:1-6  
 Acts 10:34-43  
 Psalm 118  
 Colossians 3:1-4  
 Matthew 28:1-10  
 John 20:1-18



**April 16, 2023**

Acts 2:14a, 22-32  
 Psalm 16  
 1 Peter 1:3-9  
 John 20:19-31



**April 23, 2023**

Acts 2:14a, 36-41  
 Psalm 116  
 1 Peter 1:17-23  
 Luke 24:13-35

**April 30, 2023**

Acts 2:42-47  
 Psalm 23  
 1 Peter 2:19-25  
 John 10:1-10

## February 2023 Financial Report

*Rick Monarch, Treasurer*

### Expenses

BWC Mission Share	\$1,184.16
Pastor's Salary (1/3 of total salary)	\$1,563.42
Associate Pastor's Salary (1/3 of total salary)	\$405.50
Church Secretary's Wages	\$457.52
Organist / Pianist	\$400.00
Worker's Compensation Insurance	\$0.00
Payroll Taxes	\$35.00
Capital Improvement Costs	\$0.00
Grass Cutting Costs	\$0.00
Snow Plowing Costs	\$0.00
Groundskeeper Costs	\$0.00
Custodian's Salary	\$210.00
Programs	\$64.81
Property Insurance	\$0.00
Administrative Expenses	\$309.12
Charge Treasury - Parsonage Expenses	\$390.85
Charge Treasury - Professional Expenses	\$113.92
Charge Treasury - Medical Insurance Cost	\$296.66
Charge Treasury - Retirement Contribution	\$332.23
Charge Treasury - Administrative Costs	\$12.50
Trustees - Maintenance Costs	\$722.57
Miscellaneous	\$0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$6,498.26</b>

### Income

Weekly Collections	\$3,785.00
Cell Tower Rental Fee - Sprint	\$2,167.34
Use of Hall	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	\$0.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$5,952.34</b>

# Easter Week Services & Events



## Please Join Us...



On **Palm Sunday, April 2**, for a Celebratory Worship Service with our all of us proclaiming Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem more than 2,000 years ago. *(Please note that*

*if you would like to order beautiful flowering plants to decorate our Sanctuary on Easter morning, your order and payment are due by the end of this service. Forms are available in the vestibule.)*

On **Maundy Thursday, April 6**, for a Holy Thursday Foot Washing Service. This will be held at Salem UMC on Route 27 in Cedar Grove at 7 pm,



On **Good Friday, April 7**, for our Charge Traditional Good Friday Worship Service here at Wesley Grove at 7 pm.

On **Easter Morning, Sunday, April 17**, for a Celebration of Our Risen Lord and Savior at sunrise outside on the lawn by our ballfield. This annual "Sonrise" Service will begin at



6:30 am and will be followed by a fellowship breakfast in our hall. We would appreciate you signing up for this meal on the sheet in the vestibule, just to give us an idea of how many will attend. You and your family are then invited to return again at 11 am for our traditional Easter Worship Service inside the Sanctuary. Our bell choir will play during this service, which can also be accessed online via Zoom. *(Please note that our Sunday School Class will not meet on this day.)*

# Upcoming Community Events

*Saturday, April 1* — **Cash Bingo and Dinner Fundraiser** at the Damascus American Legion on Lewis Drive — Doors open at 5 pm and games begin at 7 pm. Tickets are available at the door.

*Saturday, April 29* — **National Christian Choir Concert** at Potomac Valley Assembly Church, located at 22901 Ridge Road in Germantown. This amazing and free concert begins at 6 pm. Sign up in the vestibule and maybe some of us can go for dinner together afterwards.

*Saturday, April 29, Sunday, April 30, Tuesday, May 2, and Thursday, May 4* — **Franklin Graham's "God Loves You" Tidewater Tour**, featuring a variety of guest speakers and live music by the Newsboys, Marcos Witt, and Dennis Agajanian. These free events will be held on the dates above in La Plata, Timonium, Elkton, and Salisbury, respectively.

*Friday, May 5* — **"The Voice of the Martyrs"** at McLean Bible Church in Vienna, VA — Two Christians who were taken hostage by militant Muslims in the Philippines in 2001 and in Sudan in 2015 will talk about their experiences and rescues. You must pre-register for this free event at [VOM.org/events](http://VOM.org/events).

*For additional information on any of these special events, please see the flyers hanging in the vestibule or contact Tammy at home at 301-253-0044 or via email at [WesleyGrove208@verizon.net](mailto:WesleyGrove208@verizon.net).*



## Fellowship News

*Becky Lewis, Chair*

The Christian Fellowship Committee invites you to warm up and share a meal with your church family following the **Sonrise Service** on Easter morning, April 9. After you attend the 6:30 am service, plan to stop in the heated hall for **breakfast** and a time of togetherness with your church family. Everything is provided; however, if you know in advance that you're planning to attend, please sign up in the vestibule to give hosts, Becky and Brian, an idea of how many individuals they'll be serving. **Last-minute attendees are still welcome!**



**Dinner & Movie Night**, in cooperation with the Education Committee, is also on the April calendar, on Saturday, April 15, at 6 pm. Please sign up in the vestibule if you'll be attending, and plan to bring a side dish to share in a fellowship meal before viewing the featured movie for the evening.



Looking ahead to May, the **Spring Community Yard Sale** on Saturday, May 13 is coming up fast. Get those closets cleaned out now and decide if you want to donate items to the church booth or rent a space to sell them on your own (\$20 for a space, \$25 for a space with a table). If you want a space, please call Tammy (301-253-0044); if you can help with the event, please contact Becky (240-338-3211) or Brian (240-338-3210).

While you're marking that event on your May calendar, be sure you also add **Coffee & Conversation** after church on Sunday, May 7 and our **Annual Mother's Day Breakfast** at 9:30 am on Sunday, May 14.

## April Birthdays

- 1 Randy Falk
- 5 Katie Ketchum Vitullo
- 8 Judy Briggs
- 16 Sally Swearingen
- 17 Mike Sherwood  
Kenny Benson
- 19 Cara Lynagh
- 23 Michael Mirani
- 25 Scott Iles
- 28 Kris Kemp Kepner



# BINGO,

## Anyone???

The Damascus Volunteer Fire Department will host its spring Dinner and Bingo Fundraiser later this month on Friday, April 28. Just like in years past, the doors will open at 5 pm, fried chicken dinners will be served starting at 5:30 pm, and the 20 games of bingo will begin at 7 pm. If you are interested in joining the group of us from Wesley Grove attending this event, please contact Jim and Lois Kemp at 301-253-2859 by April 21 to reserve your tickets, which cost \$50 per person. If you decide to wait and buy them at the door, the price increases to \$60 per person. All proceeds benefit our local fire department and the Damascus Days Hometown Celebration in July.

*Looking Ahead to May...*

### Spring Community Yard Sale



**Saturday, May 13**  
9 am to 2 pm

**Spaces Available - \$20**

**Table Rentals - \$5**

Contact Tammy at 301-253-0044 to reserve your space(s).

Donations Gratefully Accepted  
*Please have these at the hall by noon on Friday, May 12.*

Donations of Baked Goods  
*would also be very much appreciated.*



### Missions News

*Judy Hughes, Chair*

Mark you calendars now to join us on Saturday, June 17 from 10 am to 4 pm for Colonial Day at the Strawbridge Home and Shrine in New Windsor, MD.

This annual event celebrates the life and contributions of America's first Methodist preacher — Robert Strawbridge and his wife, Elizabeth. More information about this church-wide field trip will be printed in our May newsletter.



### We're Looking for 2023 Graduates!



Please email or call the church office if you know of anyone in our extended Wesley Grove Church Family who will be graduating this spring from high school, college, graduate school, or trade/technical school. Like in years past, we plan to highlight them and their accomplishments in the May issue of this newsletter.

Please remember that we also offer Wesley Grove collegiate scholarships to those in our congregation who have actively participated in the life of this church while attending middle and high school. If you would like to receive an application, please contact Tammy in the church office. All applications are due back by Saturday, April 30. Recipients will be notified in mid May.



### Dinner and a Movie

**Saturday, April 15**

Dinner will begin 6 pm and consist of fried chicken and a variety of delicious side dishes. Please bring one or two to share.

After eating, we will watch *Son of God*, a full-length feature film that was released in the theaters in 2014. Dessert will be served after the movie. Please sign up in the vestibule, so we will know how much chicken to order.



## Administrative Council Meeting

Monday, March 13, 2023

The Meeting was opened by Bob at 7:00 pm.

### In Attendance:

Steven Arndt, Louise Burdette, Bob Burke, Linda Chatterton, Pastor Karen Davis, Judy Hughes, Jim Kemp, Becky Lewis, Rick Monarch, Carol Stone, and Pastor Nick Works.

### Devotions:

- Pastor Nick provided the devotion and accompanying readings.

### Prayer Requests:

Cathy and Tammy are absent tonight as they are both not feeling well.

### Good News:

- Donnie Hottinger's heart surgery went well last week.
- Hottinger grandchildren's court outcome was in their favor.
- New grandchild for the Hottingers and 10<sup>th</sup> great-grandchild for the Kings were both born this past week.
- Carla Works has been nominated to become the next Dean of Wesley Theological Seminary, beginning July 1, 2023.

### Old Business:

None.

### New Business:

None.

### Minutes:

- Pastor Nick motioned that the minutes from the January 9 meeting be approved as presented in the February newsletter. Steven seconded the motion. All were in favor.

### Committee Reports:

#### Communications

- Ten greeting cards have been mailed since our last meeting.
- Continual updates are posted on our website and Facebook pages.

#### Education

- Sunday School is going strong with an average of 12 each week.
- Lenten book study is occurring on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings with a total of almost 20 participants from all three churches.
- After Easter, we will focus on the different denominations of Christianity --- their similarities and differences.
- On Saturday, April 15, we will host Dinner and Movie Night at 6 pm. Fried chicken, dessert, and beverages will be provided. Bring a dish to share. Movie will probably be *Son of God*.

#### Fellowship

- Have resumed periodic fellowship hours after church.
- Breakfast, hosted by Brian and Becky, will be provided after Easter Sunrise Service.
- Dinner and Movie Night is scheduled for April 15.

#### Finance

- We have currently paid all of our expenses.

- We are in the process of obtaining estimates from GAC and Donald B. Lowe for repairs and/or replacements of both the heating and cooling systems in the church.

### Lay Leadership

- Annual Conference is once again in-person on June 1-3 in Baltimore. Pastor Karen and Steven will be attending as our representatives. Details should be published soon.

### Missions

- The Soup Kitchen is short on food. We sent a check for \$150.
- We serve next at the Soup Kitchen on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29. Since the number of folks served has increased, we may need additional volunteers.
- Damascus HELP needs more food donations. WG sent \$150 check.
- We are planning a trip to the Strawbridge Home & Shrine's History Day on Saturday, June 17.
- Next meeting will be on Thursday, October 12.

### SPRC

- Eugenia Posey-Marcos was hired in early February as our organist/pianist. Folks seem to be happy to have live music back in our Sanctuary.

### Trustees

- The work at the Staley House is completed, and the house is ready to rent. Rick offered a special thanks to Jim and Bob for all the work that they have done. Brian will take pictures of the renovation.
- Pastor Karen has created a small list of repairs that are needed in the parsonage.
- As per our contract, Damascus Sports Association will use the ballfield again this year.
- The port-a-potty contract has been renewed for the season.

### Worship

- Maundy Thursday worship service will be held at Salem UMC at 7 pm.
- We will host the Charge's Good Friday worship service at 7 pm.
- The Holy Week Schedule has been published in/on the church newsletter, website, and Facebook page.
- Choir will sing again periodically from March 19 through May.

### Pastors' Reports:

- *Pastor Karen* is in contact with the Conference to get information about resources and workshops aimed at increasing church membership.
- She spoke with Christie Latona and Bill Brown (both at BWC) about us participating in "The Faithful Path" (4-6 month book study with an assigned guide). We have until this Thursday to decide.
- *Pastor Nick* has contacted all families and members of the church who no longer attend and have been absent for an extended period of time.
- He will be changing roles at Wesley Seminary this summer.

### Next Meeting:

- Scheduled for Monday, May 8 at 7:00 pm.
- Devotions by Carol Stone.

The meeting was adjourned by Bob at 8:05 pm.

# April 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9:00 AM— Hand Bell Practice 5:00 PM— American Legion Bin- go Fundraiser
2 <b>Palm Sunday</b> 9:30 AM— Sunday School 11:00 AM— Worship Service	3	4 6:45 PM— Lions Club Dinner & Meeting	5 3:30 PM— Choir Practice	6 <b>Maundy Thursday</b> 7:00 PM— Charge Worship Service at Salem UMC	7 <b>Good Friday</b> 7:00 PM— Charge Worship Service at WGUMC	8 9:00 AM— Hand Bell Practice
9 <b>Easter Sunday</b> 6:30 AM— “Sonrise” Service 7 AM—Breakfast 11:00 AM— Traditional Indoor Worship Service	10	11	12 3:30 PM— Choir Practice	13	14	15 6:00 PM— Family Dinner and Movie Night
16 9:30 AM— Sunday School 11:00 AM— Worship Service	17	18 6:45 PM— Lions Club Dinner & Meeting <i>Deadline for May Newsletter Submissions</i>	19 7:00 PM— Choir Practice	20	21	22
23 9:30 AM— Sunday School 11:00 AM— Worship Service	24 7:00 PM— Board of Trustees Meeting	25 3:00 PM— Book Club Mtg. @ Joyce’s House	26 12:00 PM— Lunch Out at Siempre de Fiesta 7:00 PM— Choir Practice	27 7:00 PM— Staff Parish Com- mittee Meeting ( <i>Note date change</i> )	28 5:00 PM— DVPD Fundraiser Dinner & Bingo Night	29 6:00 PM— National Christian Choir Concert in Ger- mantown
						30

**Wesley Grove  
United Methodist Church**

Church Phone: 301-253-2894  
Email: [wgumc@wesleygroveumc.org](mailto:wgumc@wesleygroveumc.org)

**As a Church Family that...**

- \* covenants to walk together in Christ's peace,
- \* believes that all persons are created equal,  
and
- \* affirms the inclusive love of Jesus Christ,

**We Welcome All to Our Work and Worship,**  
regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age,  
ability, sexual orientation, and/or economic  
circumstance.



THE  
EASTER SEASON  
Is UPON US

*Alleluia  
to Our  
Risen Lord!*



To unsubscribe, please call the Wesley Grove UMC Office (301-253-2894) or email [wgumc@wesleygroveumc.org](mailto:wgumc@wesleygroveumc.org)

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