

Holy Week



Holy Thursday, March 28th

- ▶ Passover Seder Meal at 7pm in the Activity Center (reservations required).
- ▶ Maundy Thursday Service Bridge of Hope at 7pm.

Good Friday, March 29th

- ▶ Service at 7pm in the Sanctuary

Saturday, March 30th

- ▶ Easter Egg Hunt, 2pm at Taylorsville.

Easter Sunday, March 31

- ▶ Combined service with 8:30am at Sulphur Grove at 10:45am.
- ▶ Bridge of Hope at 11am.

The SonLight
Published Monthly

Sulphur Grove UMC
7505 Taylorsville Road
Huber Heights, OH
45424



Sulphur Grove United Methodist Church

“Growing Disciples, Living and Sharing God’s love”



Coffee Chat



Spring is upon us! After the dark, cold days of winter, the days are noticeably getting longer as the darkness of winter is overcome by the return of the light. It will be especially noticeable on Sunday March 10th with the change to Daylight Savings Time. May the return of the light remind us of how Jesus is indeed the Light of the world that overcomes the darkness. Let it remind us of how the light brings new life from the deadness of winter. May it remind us that Jesus is the Light that brings new life for us from our deaths, a life that will never end. That is the hope and promise we have through faith in Jesus Christ. Take time to reflect and give thanks to God for the gift of Jesus, the Light of the world.

Holy week this year begins on Palm Sunday, March 24th. The Holy Week schedule will include a Passover Seder on Thursday the 28th at 7:00 p.m. Diane and I will once again smoke leg of lamb for the Passover celebration and symbolic meal. This year we are also thinking of roasting the eggs, the traditional way rather than boiling the eggs hard. The risk of roasting the eggs is that if you roast them too quickly – they may explode in the oven creating a massive mess! The risk is worth, according to some, as they say once you have had a roasted egg you will never want hard boiled eggs again! Also roasted eggs are said to release the shell very easily when peeled. So, we'll give it a try! A Good Friday service will be held at 7:00 p.m. At this point arrangements are pending. As is the custom of Sulphur Grove, Easter Sunday will be a combined service at the Taylorsville campus at 10:45 a.m.

On Sunday February 4th we held our annual Spud Bowl hosted by our youth and State of the Church address. The one downside to the year 2023 was we finished the year around \$32,000 in the red. Giving was about where it normally was for the first half of the year. As is usual for Sulphur Grove, there is a decrease in giving during the summer months and then it picks back up to normal levels after school starts in the fall. In 2023, the giving did not pick up after the summer months and we accrued a significant deficit. At one point it was as much as a \$75,000 deficit. The leadership board implemented a spending freeze on all spending. December was a very good month financially and the deficit decreased to around \$32,000. Fortunately, we had reserve funds, primarily from the Payroll Protection Program that we applied for during COVID-19. We were able to cover the \$32,000 deficit and finish 2023 with a zero balance. However, we have mostly depleted our reserve funds.

A question was asked at the State of the Church Address regarding what the leadership of the church is doing to address church finances so we do not end up with another large deficit at the end of 2024. First, the leadership board reduced the 2024 budget by 7.7% from \$733,592 (2023) to \$681,096 (2024). That's a decrease of \$52,496 in the budget. The second step taken is the adoption of a new financial policy for Sulphur Grove. The new policy for Sulphur Grove is that the budget for the following year shall not exceed the total giving received for the previous year. Let me give you a hypothetical example. Let's say the total giving for year XXX1 is \$600,000. Following the newly adopted rule, the budget for the next year, XXX2 shall not be more than the \$600,000 received the previous year.

Some might think that this should have always been the policy. However, I assure you that the majority of churches have no such policy. In the churches I have served, the budget for the following year always exceeded the previous year's giving by 10% – 25%. Why? Some believe the church needs to “step out in faith” trusting that God will provide. I understand this thought and agree with it to a point. However, I balance that belief with the understanding that God also gave humanity brains with which to think. Having budgets that exceed the giving by \$50,000 or even \$100,000 just does not make good sense to me spiritually or financially. This new policy is a reasonable one for if the giving exceeds that of the previous year significantly then the Leadership Board can choose to use the additional funds for mission and ministry.

God has given us all we need to be successful in sharing the good news of Jesus and caring for those around us. Let us celebrate God's provision in 2023 and look forward to God's blessings in 2024!

Blessings and Peace in Christ Jesus,



WATCH OR LISTEN LIVE!



Traveling this spring? Visiting family? You can still worship with your friends and neighbors at Sulphur Grove! We broadcast the 10:45am service live online every week. Simply go to www.sulphurgrove.org/online to watch, or if you have a slower internet connection, you can listen to our audio-only broadcast.



Meditation from my heart...



A couple weeks ago on a Monday evening, I was beginning to prepare my meditation for Dinner at the Bridge on Wednesday. I knew in my mind what I was planning to talk about, but that idea quickly changed. I was in my bedroom heading for the door when a book fell onto the floor from the bottom shelf of my bookcase. I picked it up and put it back on the shelf, and just as I took another step it fell onto the floor again. When I picked it up this time, I looked to see what this little book was about.

As I gazed at the title, I became transformed in a variety of ways. The little book was filled with many memories. Just inside the cover were cards I carried while I was serving at Tipp City United Methodist Church. So many thoughts flooded my mind, and I became aware that I was smiling. My first nine years as a Pastor began in Tipp City.

The title of the book recalled memories of another kind. *Positive Prayers for Power-filled Living* was the name of this little book, written by

Dr. Robert Schuller. John & Freddie Charles were friends I made while serving as a pastor at Normandy United Methodist Church. When they moved to California, John interestingly enough, went to work for the Crystal Cathedral. On my first visit to their new home, when Sunday came, of course we went to church. It truly was an *Hour of Power!* Following worship, we were invited to lunch with the Schuller family. It was there I received this special gift from Dr. Robert Schuller himself. The book was written by Dr. Schuller in celebration of his fifty years of ministry.

Well, I headed back downstairs to my computer to plan for Wednesday, but I became sidetracked by this little book. The opening page had a scripture reference from Matthew 21:20 that says, *“and whatever you ask in prayer you will receive if you have faith. (Matthew 21:22”* The next page was a letter from Dr. Schuller in which he stated that his prayer was “that the book would stimulate within your heart a profound faith that will place you in a stronger and more satisfying relationship with the God who loves you.”

How does prayer play into your spiritual life? Prayer could be our greatest power of communication with God. I see prayer as a spiritual exercise which draws me ever closer toward God until we truly are a part of God’s plan and God’s purpose. I do not see prayer as a means to give me what I want when I want it, but to make me become the person God wanted me to be when I was created.

Lent is a time of deep reflection for me. How do I see myself...how does God see me? Is there anything I need to change to be closer to God or is there something new I must consider to be more effective in my service in God’s name? Prayer will be how God allows me to hear what he has in mind for my future. I wonder what message God would like you to hear?

Dr. Schuller suggests there are six steps to pray. I share them with you in my own words.

- o Pursue God – “If with all your heart you truly seek God, you will surely find God.... (Duet.4:29)”
- o Re-Examine yourself – you could pray, “I thank you, God, that you love me even when my faith is dim, dark, and dreary.”
- o Affirm what God can do through you with a positive attitude. Negativity only weakens you.
- o Yield your will to God – Not my will, but yours be done, O God.”
(Luke 22:42)
- o Expect good, positive results – Hold a sense of joy, peace, and faith flowing from you. “If you have faith, all things are possible.
(Matt. 17:30)
- o Rejoice! Be as specific in your thanksgiving as you were in making your requests to God. “Thank you, God, for each new day...for eyes to watch my family in the most precious of moments of life....to hear the sound of my friend’s voice in the lonely times of life or to share my joy in the special moments of life.”

I am happy I opened the little book that kept trying to get my attention. I am sure this was God’s way of leading me to the real focus for my meditation that week for Dinner Church. It allowed for some good discussion about prayer that evening.

Continued from page 3

There are a few last thoughts that I gleaned from Dr. Schuller that I want you to think about. **GOD ALWAYS ANSWERS PRAYER.....**these are direct quotes from Dr, Schuller.

- When the idea is not right, God says, "No."
- No - when the idea is not the best.
- No - when the idea is absolutely wrong.
- No - when though it may help you, it would create problems for someone else.
- When the time is not right - God says, "Slow." We need patience with prayer.
- When you are not right, God says, "Grow."
- When everything is all right, God says, "Go!"

I pray the words I shared with you from my "special gift" from Dr. Schuller will give you *new insights* into the *Power of Prayer!* Allow prayer to become part of your daily routine as we continue to journey through Lent toward the Cross of death on Good Friday and Christ's Resurrection on Easter Morning. One last thought...If God will knock a book off a shelf twice to get my attention, just imagine what he has in store for all of us when we pray!

I wish you many BLESSINGS, abundant HOPE, and profound PEACE.

Pastor Bonnie



MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

"We are a 'mission church.'

We believe in reaching out to those in need locally, nationally, and globally."

LESSONS ON AGING

Tina Timmons, Certified Senior Advisor, Certified Dementia Practitioner, Owner of Oasis Senior Advisors along with a Medicare specialist will be at Sulphur Grove Church on Saturday, April 13, 2024 from 10am - 12pm in the Activity Center. This seminar will cover topics regarding elderly care, home health care, and assisted living options. Oasis offers free personalized referrals for senior housing and other resources to older adults and their families.

ST. PAUL'S LUNCHEON

We served 165 meals at St Paul's United Methodist Church on Tuesday, February 6th. We served Johnny Marzetti, green beans, French bread, homemade cupcakes, gum, Gatorade, and water. I want to thank Joyce Pahren, Shari Coover, Rita Carmen, and Dave for helping to serve all these meals. Thank you, Joyce, for helping me make the cupcakes.

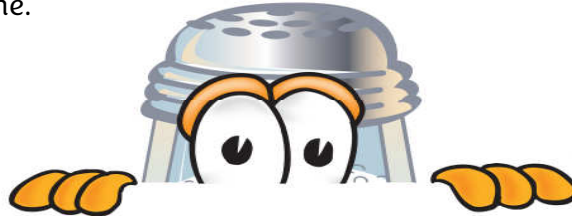
Clela Farlee

MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

*"We are a 'mission church.'
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NEW SALT SHAKERS WELCOME

Looking for a place to get to know your Sulphur Grove Family better? Join one of the Salt Shaker Groups to experience an informal home setting where members of Sulphur Grove meet to have fun, food (always food) and fellowship. It's a great way to be in a fun group. Interested couples and singles call Peggy Beavin (937-236-6260) to become part of one of these groups. You'll be glad you did and feel even more comfortable in your church home.



EASTER FLOWERS...It's time to place your Easter flower orders. You can take your flowers home for your own enjoyment after the worship celebrations on Easter Sunday. The deadline for your order is **March 18th** (anything turned in after this date, will not be accepted).

(Please tear off and place with check in envelope and put in offering plate or bring to the Church Office.)

PLEASE CHECK ONE: for **Taylorville** Campus for **Bridge of Hope** Campus
If no location is checked, they will be at the Taylorville campus.



\$12.00 for the following...

How many Type (6 inch)
_____ Tulips
_____ Hyacinths
_____ Daffodils

\$14.00 for the following...

How many Type (7 inch)
_____ Tulips
_____ Hyacinths

Various Prices & Sizes for...

How many
_____ Easter Lilies (2 plants) - \$34.00
_____ Easter Lily (6 inch) - \$14.00
_____ Pot Mums (6 inch) - \$15.00
_____ Hydrangeas (3 bloom) - \$22.00
_____ Azaleas (6 inch) - \$22.00

In **honor** OR **memory** OR **celebration** of: _____

Circle one

I am enclosing \$ _____.

Your Name: _____ Phone: _____

Thank you for purchasing flowers to decorate our church this Easter. Please remember to take your flowers home with you after the Easter Worship services. If you do not wish to keep your flowers, consider giving them to a friend or neighbor. Flowers not picked up by Wednesday, April 3rd will be disposed of by the church office.

~~ UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH NEWS ~~

All Ladies are invited to attend these meetings and events

- ◆ CARITAS will meet Wednesday, March 6 at 9:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. The Fish item is a small laundry detergent. For more information contact Brenda Stevenson (937) 506-8959 or Brenda.Stevenson@ameritech.net.
- ◆ NEW DIMENSIONS will meet Tuesday, March 12 at 6:30 pm in the Gathering Area. They will continue discussing the book, Aging Faithfully. The Fish item is a small laundry detergent. For more information contact Darlene Rabe (937) 307-5489 or rabedc@aol.com.
- ◆ BAKE SALE on Sunday, March 24 in the Gathering Area.



UMW/United Women in Faith is having a Bake Sale on Palm Sunday, March 24, in the Gathering Area. There will be cupcakes, cookies, pies and, many more delicious homemade goodies for you and your family to enjoy. All proceeds from the bake sale will be given to support the many missions and ministries of the United Women in Faith.



~~ FROM THE OFFICE ~~

REMINDER



Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, March 10th at 2am. Don't forget to 'Spring Forward' an hour!
Spring is coming.

OFFICE CLOSED

The office will be closed on Monday, April 1st, the Monday after Easter. We will reopen on Tuesday, April 2nd at 9:00am.



DON'T FORGET!

Faith & Fitness each Wednesday at 1pm in the Activity Center.
All fitness levels, everyone is welcome!



March

Worship SCHEDULE

TAYLORSVILLE

Worship 8:30am & 10:45am

<p>March 3 3rd Sunday of Lent COMMUNION <i>"Kingdom Living: A Life of Submission to God: Does It Glorify God?"</i> John 2: 13-22</p>	<p>March 28 Holy Thursday Passover Seder Meal - 7pm in the Activity Center Maundy Thursday Service - 7pm Bridge of Hope</p>
<p>March 10 4th Sunday of Lent <i>"Kingdom Living: A Life of Submission to God: Live and Let Live?"</i> John 3: 14-21</p>	<p>March 31 Good Friday Service at 7pm in the Sanctuary</p>
<p>March 17 5th Sunday of Lent <i>"Kingdom Living: A Life of Submission to God: Father, Glorify Your Name!"</i> John 12: 20-33</p>	<p>March 31 Easter Sunday 10:45am combined service with 8:30am <i>Kingdom Living: A Life of Submission to God: Raised to New Life"</i> Mark 16: 1-8</p>
<p>March 24 Palm Sunday <i>"Kingdom Living: A Life of Submission to God: Following in the Footsteps Of Jesus"</i> Mark 15: 1-39</p>	

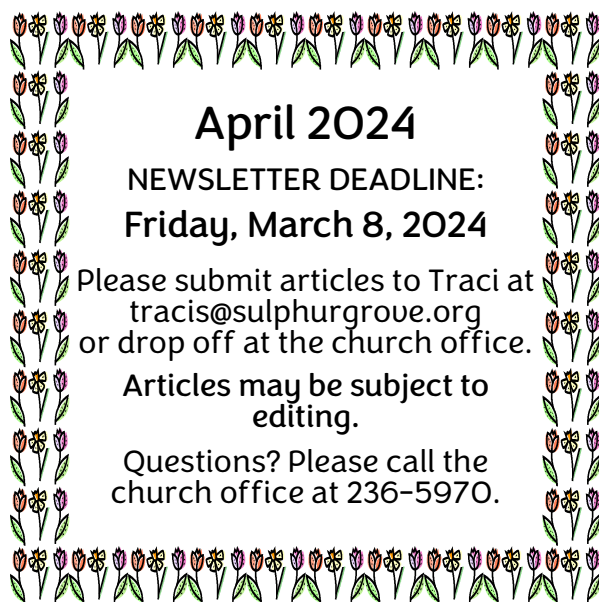
Please keep in mind, if you do not feel comfortable returning to church just yet, or physically cannot join us in person, online streaming is available.

SULPHUR GROVE GIVING OF OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS—YEAR TO DATE AS OF JANUARY 31, 2024

Total General Fund Giving	\$41,137.22
Transfers to Budget	\$32,160.96
Total General Fund Income	\$73,298.18
Total General Fund Expenses	\$48,085.46
Loan Balance	\$462,681.87
Payment to Loan Principal	\$1,200,916.20

On-line giving available on our website at www.sulphurgrove.org.

Monthly detailed finance reports are available through the church office. Please contact Ray Fosnot at treasurer@sulphurgrove.org or 236-5970 if you would like to receive a report or have questions.



April 2024

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:
Friday, March 8, 2024

Please submit articles to Traci at traci@sulphurgrove.org or drop off at the church office.

Articles may be subject to editing.

Questions? Please call the church office at 236-5970.

Sulphur Grove United Methodist Church Ministers

The People of Sulphur Grove United Methodist Church including:

Barry Baughman Lead Pastor
Bonnie Loudner Congregational Care Pastor
Jerrie Bell-Brion Interim Pastor, Bridge of Hope

Candy Buffenbarger..Director of Children’s Ministries
Samantha Seeberg.....Choir Director
James Edwards-Kenion...Handbell Choir Director

Ray Fosnot.....Treasurer
Dave HuntFinancial Secretary
Nikki Smith.....Administrative Assistant
Traci SchaafAdministrative Assistant

SULPHUR GROVE CHURCH
7505 Taylorsville Road
Huber Heights OH 45424
(937) 236-5970
Worship ~ 8:30am & 10:45am

Kiawanda Language Worship
4:00pm-6:00pm in Holden Chapel

Bridge of Hope
6805 US 40
Tipp City, OH 45371
937-845-8025
Worship ~ 11am

Office Hours:
Mon - Fri: 9:00am - 1:30pm
www.sulphurgrove.org office@sulphurgrove.org



Check out our Info Hub for quick and easy access to our Digital Bulletin, Announcements & Events, Digital Connect Card, Online Giving, or submit Prayer Requests. Go to www.sulphurgrove.org/info or scan the code with your phone’s camera!