

Groce UMC's

The Messenger

Volume 39; Issue 4
April 1, 2026



Easter as a Season

Carrying the promise of
Easter throughout the year

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“Living as Easter People”

Submitted by Rev. Jill Rhinehart

There is something about April that feels full of promise.

The days begin to stretch a little longer. The trees start to bloom. The earth begins to wake up again after winter. And in the life of the Church, we are still living in the joy and wonder of Easter.

That is important for us to remember, because Easter is not just one Sunday on the calendar. In the Church, Easter is a season. More than that, Easter is the truth we live by as followers of Jesus Christ.

As United Methodists, we believe deeply in the grace of God—the grace that seeks us before we ever turn toward God, the grace that meets us in Jesus Christ, and the grace that keeps shaping us day by day. Easter is the clearest sign of that grace. It is God’s declaration that sin does not win, death does not win, despair does not win. In Christ, life has the final word.

That is good news, because most of us do not live in a constant state of Easter joy. We live in the real world. We carry burdens. We pray over family concerns. We worry about our children and grandchildren. We grieve losses. We wonder what the future holds. Some days we come to church with hearts full of praise, and some days we come simply because we need to be reminded that God is still with us.

And thanks be to God, that is exactly what the risen Christ does.

After the resurrection, Jesus did not appear first to people who had everything together. He came to disciples who were frightened, uncertain, grieving, and hiding behind closed doors. And His first words to them were not words of disappointment or correction. They were words of peace. **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you... John 14:27**

I think many of us need to hear that same word again: Peace.

Peace for anxious hearts.

Peace for weary souls.

Peace for people carrying more than anyone else knows.

This is one of the gifts of the Church. Week after week, we gather to hear the story again. We sing the hymns of faith. We pray for one another. We come to the Lord’s Table and remember that Christ is present with us still. In Word, in song, in prayer, in fellowship, and in Holy Communion, the risen Christ continues to meet His people.

And then, we are sent back out into the world to live what we have received.

We are not called to keep Easter inside the walls of the church. We are called to carry it into our homes, our neighborhoods, our workplaces, our schools, and our community. We are called to be people of hope in a world that often feels weary and divided. We are called to offer kindness, mercy, compassion, and love—not because life is always easy, but because Christ is alive.

John Wesley reminded us that there is no holiness but social holiness. In other words, our faith is meant to be lived out in relationship—with God and with one another. Easter faith is not private or passive. It is living, active, and full of grace.

So this month, my prayer is simple: that we would live as Easter people.

May we trust that God is still at work, even in places where we cannot yet see it.

May we remember that no stone is too heavy for God to roll away.

May we hold fast to the promise that resurrection is still God’s way.

And may we, as children of God, continue to love God, love neighbor, and share the good news of Jesus Christ with joy and faithfulness.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.

“I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN ME, EVEN THOUGH THEY DIE, WILL LIVE.”

— JOHN 11:25

Project AGAPE Update

Project Agape Sunday in WNCC will be Sunday, April 26. Per the Conference, churches are asked to take an offering to support the ongoing ministry that began in 1994 and continues today. Support for our Christian brothers and sisters in Armenia is still needed, especially since the recent invasion of Azerbaijan supported by Turkey, and the loss of their historic land of Artsakh. Monetary donations will be used to help the thousands of lives displaced by the 2020 war.

Donations needed to support Project AGAPE. Donations should be brought to Groce UMC between **Monday, April 27– Thursday April 30.**

Items needed: (All donations must be NEW because of Armenian shipping regulations.)

1. New clothing for men, women, children of all ages.
2. New shoes for men, women, children of all ages.
3. New coats, gloves and mittens for men, women, and children of all ages
4. New bedding such as sheets, blankets, bed coverings and pillows.
5. New towels, wash cloths, hand towels.
6. New kitchen wares such as pots and pans, serving dishes, table dishes, serving and table utensils, cups and saucers
7. New hygiene and toiletry items
8. Sewing fabric, needles, thread, etc.



Packing instructions:
Please place your NEW items in an appropriately sized box so that it is full, close and tape securely, and mark it "Project AGAPE" with the type of contents such as "clothing", "shoes", "housewares", etc.

YOUTH AT GROCE

SUBMITTED BY KELLEY WOEHL



Our Youth Group has been discussing Genesis this semester, including reenactments of epic battles, trivia questions about Noah's Ark, and open discussions about the ways God speaks to us through scripture and personal experience.

This spring is an exciting time, we're looking forward to our mission trip this summer, and a few Graduates who will be beginning their college careers in the Fall.

For more information on the Youth Group and its programming, check out the bulletin board at the bottom of the stairs/ outside Charter Hall. This space will be regularly updated with information about the Youth program.



Things I wish I knew about Faith:

SUBMITTED BY KELLEY WOEHL

As we approach Confirmation Sunday (April 19th!) please join us in participating in a congregation-wide reflection on faith.

In the church office are colorful pieces of paper where you can anonymously write something you wish you knew about faith when you were younger, or some piece of faithful advice you've learned. Kelley Woehl will install these pieces for everyone to reflect on and learn from.

Submissions will be accepted through April 26th. Let us all learn from one another!



PROM DRESS EXCHANGE 2026

SUBMITTED BY MARSHA VAN RIJSSEN

I want to thank Groce UMC for their continued support of The Prom Dress Exchange.

Many of the church members helped make 435 young men and women look and feel fabulous for prom.

So many came together to help with setting up for the event, working one on one with a young adult at the event and helping get everything back out to my studio after the event.

The church and its members also helped to provide snacks for the attendants to the event as well as the volunteers.

Everyone helped spread the word and get much needed dress/suit donations. It truly takes a village and I am so happy to each and every one who believes in this mission.

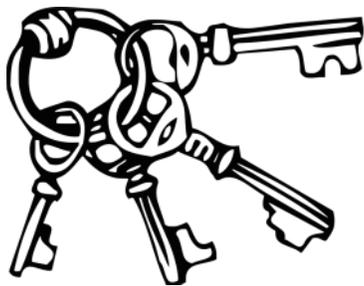
Thank you all for your hearts and hands! I am forever grateful to Groce!



Our Church Secretary, **Mariah Wright**, and her family are finally going home after losing their house in Hurricane Helene, thanks to the generosity of BeLoved Asheville! To celebrate, we will be doing a simple “drop-in housewarming party” on **April 16th**. Stop by the church office between **12-4** with a gift, or just warm wishes. They are registered on Amazon under “Mariah Wright” and the registry name is “Going Home”.

https://www.amazon.com/registries/gi/guest-view/1J2JU5NJV5XC2?ref=cm_sw_r_apan_ggr-subnav-share_1EAY70VFK3CD9RR14CS4&language=en-US

CALLING ALL KEYS!



We are working on updating our files in regards to church keys. If you have a key to the church, please let us know so we can add you to the list. And if you have a key but no longer need it, please return it to the office. For any questions, contact Mariah at gumcadmin@groceumc.org

2026 Groce Italian Dinner Organized by the United Methodist Men

Once again, Groce will have its Italian Dinner on Saturday, May 9th, at 6 p.m. with its lovingly prepared Italian menu and complemented by a talent show. Be on the lookout for more detailed information but be sure to mark your calendar.



Summer Music Camp is coming!

“DOWN BY THE CREEKBANK”

July 13-17 Performance: Friday, July 17, 6:00pm

Lots of summertime crafts, outdoor fun, and music!

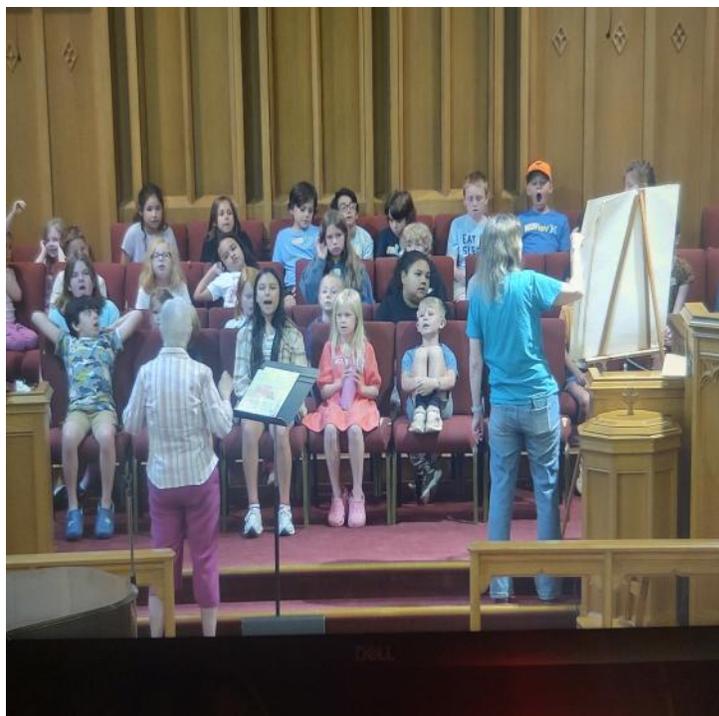
Cost: \$40.00 for one child, \$30.00 per child for more than one child

Scholarships Available!

To register call 828-298-7647 or go to groceumc.org after March 15

Contact Becky Wilburn to help volunteer or provide scholarships

musicdirector@groceumc.org



TL3 Meeting Notes

Submitted by True Morse

March 23, 2026, Groce Leadership Team

(TL3 – Team Loving Learning Leading) Meeting Summary

Topics Discussed

- 2025 Audit report (done by Marge Ottofy and Judy Sexton) approval
- Unusual or non-recurring income identification when sharing Groce's financial position
- Summary financial status
- Accounting firm change from Crawley Lee to Accounting Specialties starting April 1st
- Alternative income sources follow up
- Carpet cleaning recently completed
- Cub Scout Pack 4 to start meeting at Groce April 2nd pending agreement finalization
- Music Camp grant and potential use for playground safety improvements
- 2026 TL3 goals and priorities:
 - * External communications - social media plan and process development
 - * Spring or Summer picnic and open house potentially part of a July 4th 250 year anniversary celebration
 - * Multi-generational and cross-generational relationship emphasis
 - * Financial stewardship
 - * Ministry team support by TL3
- Potential of a food distribution ministry was discussed that would need to be discussed with the Outreach ministry team
- Technology priorities; automated calling system, sanctuary flat screens, new phone system training
- Jill sharing Church Family items of interest such as baptisms, new regular visitors, individuals joining Groce, etc.

To read the full meeting notes follow this [link](#) to the Groce website.

Upcoming Events



YOU'RE INVITED TO
OUR EASTER SERVICES

Maundy Thursday ~ April 2 | 7pm

Good Friday ~ April 3 | Noon
 LUNCH TO FOLLOW

Easter Sunday ~ April 5
 7am & 10:30am

954 TUNNEL ROAD
 ASHEVILLE, NC, 28805

828.298.7647

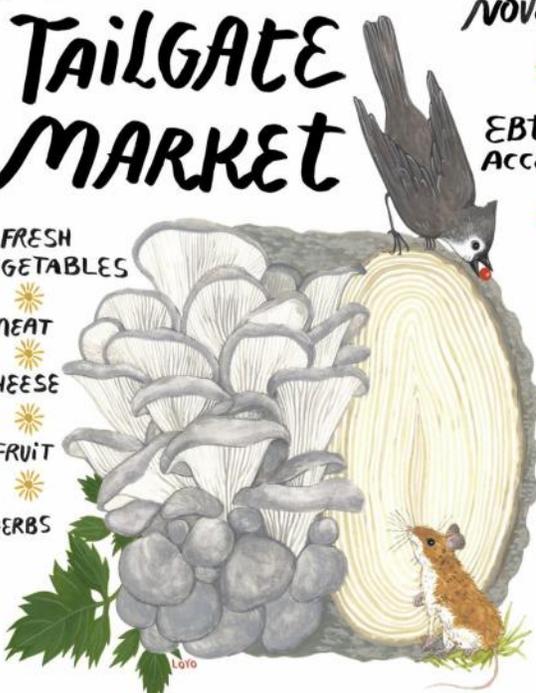
WWW.GROCEUMC.ORG

EAST ASHEVILLE TAILGATE MARKET

FRIDAYS
 3-6 PM

APRIL
 to
 NOVEMBER

EBT & SNAP ACCESSIBLE



FRESH VEGETABLES
 MEAT
 CHEESE
 FRUIT
 HERBS

FLOWERS
 BREAD
 PASTRIES
 AND MORE!

954 TUNNEL ROAD
 at GROCE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

CELEBRATING

The life

OF

MARY KRISTINE (KRIS) ALDRICH
 FEBRUARY 26, 1939 - DECEMBER 17, 2025

Ceremony

SATURDAY, APRIL 4TH
1 P.M.

Groce United Methodist
954 Tunnel Rd.
Asheville, NC 28805





Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 04/07** **April Thomas** **04/20—Terri & Tim Kilmer (41)**
- 04/08** **Kathy Tullis**
- 04/10** **Mike Lamb**
- 04/11** **Ella Hoffert**
Teaghan Powell
- 04/12** **Cindy Day**
- 04/15** **Jane Morse**
- 04/20** **Carter Ratcliff**
- 04/21** **George Cole**
- 04/23** **Mason Lamb**
- 04/29** **Hanley Rhein**
- 04/30** **Nancy Lewis**



Native American Ministries Sunday (April 19th)

Native American Ministries Sunday serves to remind United Methodists of the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to our society and in our communities. With more than 20,000 Native Americans within the denomination, this Special Sunday helps to ensure that Native American United Methodist leaders are recognized and to celebrate their special voice in The United Methodist Church.



An offering is taken on this day and is used to develop and strengthen Native American ministries in the annual conferences, and Native American rural, urban, reservation ministries and communities. It also provides scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology.

April 2026



Oh Lord, You loved this world so much that you gave your one and only Son, that we might be called your children too. Lord, help us to live in the gladness and grace of Easter Sunday every day. Let us have hearts of thankfulness for your sacrifice. Let us have eyes that look upon Your grace and rejoice in our salvation. Please help us to walk in that mighty grace and tell your good news to the world. All for Your glory do we pray, Lord, Amen.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 5 EASTER DAY 7:00 Sunrise Service and Breakfast 9:00 Agape (CH) 10:30 Worship 5:00 Youth	6 OFFICE CLOSED 11:00 Prayer Group (PR) 1:00 Canasta (AH) 3:00 Handbells 6:00 Guitar League (AH)	7 10:00 Parkinsons (AH) 10:30 Crafters (CH) 1:30 Tai Chi (CH) 7:00 SMBB (AH)	8 10:00 Balance (CH) 4:00 Nurture (JB) 5:15 UMM @ VRQ 5:30 Choir 6:00 AA (Epworth) 7:00 Men's Chorus	9 10:30 Isaac Group (JB) 1:30 Tai Chi (CH) 5:00 Welcome Table (AH) 6:30 Cub Scouts (AH)	10 3:00 Tailgate Market 6:00 Quintet (AH)	11 3:00 Tailgate Market 6:00 Quintet (AH)
12 9:00 Agape (CH) 10:30 Worship 5:00 Youth	13 11:00 Prayer Group (PR) 3:00 Handbells 6:00 Beekeepers (AH) 6:00 Girl Scouts (Epworth)	14 10:30 Crafters (CH) 11:00 Staff Meeting (JB) 1:30 Tai Chi (CH) 7:00 SMBB (AH) 7:00 BH Exec Meeting (JB)	15 10:00 Balance (CH) 10:00 Sarah Circle (AH) 5:30 Choir 6:00 AA (Epworth) 7:00 Men's Chorus	16 10:30 Isaac Group (JB) 1:30 Tai Chi (CH) 5:00 Welcome Table (AH) 6:30 Cub Scouts (AH)	17 3:00 Tailgate Market 6:00 Quintet (AH)	18 3:00 Tailgate Market 6:00 Quintet (AH)
19 CONFIRMATION DAY 9:00 Agape (CH) 10:30 Worship 11:30 Lunch after service to celebrate Confirmation 5:00 Youth	20 11:00 Prayer Group (PR) 1:00 Canasta (AL) 3:00 Handbells 6:00 BH Annual Mtg (AH)	21 10:30 Crafters (CH) 1:30 Tai Chi (CH) 3:00 Miriam Circle (AL) 7:00 SMBB Concert (AH)	22 10:00 Balance (CH) 11:30 Table of Sixteen 5:30 Choir 6:00 AA (Epworth) 7:00 Men's Chorus	23 9:00 District Meeting (AH) 10:30 Isaac Group (JB) 1:30 Tai Chi (CH) 5:00 Welcome Table (AH) 6:30 Cub Scouts (AH)	24 3:00 Tailgate Market 6:00 Quintet (AH)	25 10:00 Guitar League (AH/CH)
26 9:00 Agape (CH) 10:30 Worship 5:00 Youth	27 11:00 Prayer Group (PR) 3:00 Handbells 6:00 TL3 Meeting (JB) 6:00 Girl Scouts (Epworth)	28 10:30 Crafters (CH) 11:00 Outreach (JB) 1:30 Tai Chi (CH) 6:00 BR Basket (CH) 7:00 SMBB (AH)	29 10:00 Balance (CH) 5:30 Choir 6:00 AA (Epworth) 7:00 Men's Chorus	30 10:30 Isaac Group (JB) 1:30 Tai Chi (CH) 5:00 Welcome Table (AH) 6:30 Cub Scouts (AH)		AH—Asbury Hall AL—Asbury Lobby CH—Charter Hall JB—Jack Bass Room PR—Prayer Room