

Groce UMC's

# The Messenger

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## Groce's Church Family

Building and Strengthening  
Our Relationships

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2026

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# “A Church Family”

BY TRUE MORSE, GROCE UMC LEADERSHIP TEAM (TEAM LOVING LEARNING LEADING-TL3) CHAIRPERSON

Well over a year after Helene, I still routinely find myself reflecting on that life-changing experience and what it continues to impart. The visible reminders make it easy to keep it front of mind. Helene was a catalyst for many things in Western North Carolina, from terrible suffering to tremendous outpourings of love, hope and help. At Groce, I feel it was a catalyst that created a new lens on our community and ourselves, one that built on our historic traits of faith, service and compassion.

**For me, two central themes have emerged that so strongly build on Groce’s mission “... to build the family of God through praising God, bringing others to Christ, teaching the faith, strengthening the fellowship, and sending forth in service.”**

**First**, we now refer to ourselves as a Church Family as opposed to congregation members. This larger embrace cradles and encourages those who see themselves connected to Groce in ways other than traditional worship service attendance, by being engaged in Groce’s spiritual journey and commitment to community in other ways. I have been blessed with numerous new relationships that emerged from Helene and continue to be nurtured in ways that are best framed by the comment, “I love Groce’s use of ‘Church Family’, it makes everyone feel welcomed and engaged.”

**Second**, I feel that God used the powerful experiences of Helene to build on the reflection and focus that emerged from our 2024 Shape Our Future Roundtables to hone those thoughts into **the current Shaping Our Future framework.**

**Centering Groce is “BUILDING & STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS With Christ & Others”** as Jesus reminds us in John 15:5 **“I am the vine; you are the branches. He who remains in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit. For without Me you can do nothing.”**

## Shaping Our Future @ Groce



**The Groce Church Family surrounds the importance of relationships with the efforts of its Worship/Witness, Nurture and Outreach Ministry Teams.**

- **Worship/Witness - Offering Vibrant & Innovative Worship & Spiritual Growth Experiences. Romans 12:2** “Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and complete will of God.”
- **Nurture - Becoming a More Multi-Generational Family of God. Psalms 145:4** “One generation shall commend Your works to another and shall declare Your mighty acts.”
- **Outreach - Providing Service to the Community & Congregation. Matthew 22:39** **“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”** An East Asheville community leader recently said, “If the question is, am I my brother’s keeper? The Groce community answers heartily in the affirmative. Thanks for all [Groce] do[es] on behalf of East Asheville.”

**None of these are successful without collaboration between, and support from, all the Ministry Teams. God’s plan for Groce is an exciting journey of passion, faith and commitment being played out through each of our hearts, hands and heads. I for one cannot wait to see where He is leading us. Praise be to God!**

## Perennials Needed

SUBMITTED BY Carolyn Cutlip

Our parking lot gardens could use a little love. If you are able to donate any perennials to help spruce them up, contact **Carolyn Cutlip** (731-420-8295) or **Sandra Justus** (828-230-5568).

**\*\*\* But please, no day lilies! \*\*\***



## Confirmation Class Retreat

SUBMITTED BY Kelley Woehl

Our Confirmation Class had their retreat this weekend, including an Escape Room (pictured here), lessons, and games. These experiences are incredibly important in forming a space of community and exploration. Our Youth spent time problem solving and considering what it means for Jesus to be an advocate for ourselves and others. We also spent time learning about God's Grace and United Methodist understandings of Prevenient, Justifying, and Sanctifying Grace at work in our lives. These activities and lessons are reinforced by the demonstrated love in our community. Groce has served as a sacred space for community and exploration for our Youth and Confirmands, and we are excited to celebrate their commitment to Christ on Confirmation Sunday, April 19th.



## Tables of 16

SUBMITTED BY Linda Lankton

Tables of 16 gathered together once again on February 25th at Longhorn Steakhouse off Tunnel Road. This is a fun group that meets monthly to share a meal and fellowship. Join them this month on March 25th at 11:30 am. For more information, contact **Linda Lankton** (lanktonlinda53@gmail.com)





## Game Night Returns!

Join us for a fun and exciting evening of fellowship and laughter. Game Night returns on March 20th at 7pm in Asbury Hall. Everyone is welcome!

## 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](http://groceumc.org) after March 15

Contact Becky Wilburn to help volunteer or provide scholarships

[musicdirector@groceumc.org](mailto:musicdirector@groceumc.org)



## Sarah Circle Bake Sale

Sarah Circle will be holding a bake sale on Palm Sunday (March 29), both before and after service, in Asbury Hall. Make sure to stop by and get some delicious goodies!

# TL3 Meeting Notes

Submitted by True Morse

**February 17, 2026**

**Attendees:** Fred Bailey, Tracey Briggs, Gary Brockway, Diane McEntire, Loring McIntyre, True Morse, Jennifer Prince, Jill Rhinehart **Absent:** Phil Crouch, Pam Rogalski, John Smith

**LOVING**

True opened the meeting with prayer. The group shared blessings and concerns about each other as well as other members of the Groce church family.

**LEARNING**

**Financial**

**Use of bus sale proceeds** – Approval occurred to use the \$10,000 from the sale of the bus and bus shelter to fully pay off the church loan. In addition, it was noted that without owning the bus other expenses are avoided that free up monies for other needs of the church, especially ministry. The ministry to provide rides to Sunday worship services would continue using personal vehicles.

**Adjusted Operations budget year-end** - Gary reviewed an adjusted 2025 Operations budget year end as a result of \$18,746 of contributions for the church loan payoff being recorded to Miscellaneous Income. When the \$18,746 is removed from Miscellaneous Income, since it was used for loan payoff, not Operations expenses, Groce’s Operations budget finished the year at a \$14,180 deficit instead of the previously reported \$4,567 surplus. Gary would discuss this with the audit team of Marge Ottofy and Judy Sexton to be added to their 2025 audit report.

**Current Cash Balance Analysis**

12/31/25 End of Year Restricted Funds Balance (excluding Endowment & Apartments)	\$84,442
2/17/26 Truist checking balance (includes 2/17 deposit, includes bus sale of \$10,000)	\$79,019
2/17/26 Truist checking balance with bus sale removed	\$69,019
Current approximate cash balance deficit	\$10-20,000

Operations to be cautious with any optional expenditures until the cash position improves. Loring to hold off on any optional facilities expenditures until the cash position improves. Consideration will be given to dedicated capital campaigns for any necessary large expenditures such as the three 31-year-old Wesley building cooling condensing units for the air conditioning.

**Interests bearing accounts** use is being maximized to gain any benefit Groce can from interest earnings on bank balances

**A preliminary discussion occurred around spending authority guidelines** for various positions to incorporate dollar amounts, cash position, when there should be a special capital campaign, etc. More discussion will occur.

**Investigation is occurring to accelerate the increase of the apartment rent rates** from the previously planned 8% per year to be able to pay off the \$30k City no interest (continued)

## TL3 Meeting Notes (cont.)

loan in 2036 to be at the City published 60% of Average Median Income rent figure in 2-3 years subject to any other City loan conditions about the rent rates. This is to ensure Groce is accumulating necessary funds for loan payoffs, utility costs, repair & maintenance costs and potential church reserves.

**The church's accounting firm, Crawley Lee, submitted increased fees of \$200/month for 2026.** Gary and Jim Ariail felt only \$100 was appropriate since Gayle and Jim have done a number of things to lessen Crawley Lee's time on Groce's work.

**Count Team** - Gary noted the dedication and competency of the count team who meets every Monday to tabulate and verify the previous week's income. Gary noted that children's change Sunday collections consume a lot of time since Groce does not have a change counter. He suggested considering changes to how this is handled such as only counting the change quarterly when the funds are sent to the Heifer Project. Creating a mechanism for direct deposits for routine pledge contributions was also discussed.

### **LEADING**

#### **Trustees**

**Meeting with Phil Crouch about alternative church sources of income ideas from session at Annual Conference.** Loring is waiting on information from Phil's contact at Denver UMC, Denver, NC, where they used a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to do all the legwork and implement electric vehicle charging stations and solar panels

**Cub Scout Pack 4 facility use request** was approved pending approval by the Cub Scout Pack and completion of the new agreements that are used between UMCs and Scouting. If this moves forward, the Pack will meet at 6:30 on Thursday evenings in Asbury Hall and Charter Hall, after Welcome Table. This was confirmed with the Welcome Table team

#### **TL3 2026 Goals & Priorities**

**External communications need to be stronger, especially social media.** Gary noted that we do a great job with Groce focused communications but are severely lacking in external communications and promotion especially in the social media arena. Everyone strongly echoed this. Tracey, Gary and True are going to work on this. Jill is going to push on solving the access issue to Groce's Facebook account.

**Spring open house and picnic.** True noted that the Epworth tenants are keenly interested in a warm weather open house, now that Warrior Canine Connection has moved, that might coincide with a Groce event, like a Spring community picnic.

**Multi-generational emphasis.** Tracey noted the continued need to emphasize and integrate multi-generational approaches in Groce's programming and ministry.

**Financial stewardship.** True noted the continued need for strong financial stewardship given Groce's current cash position.

**Ministry team support.** True noted the need for continued focus on and awareness of the ministry teams work and any support they need as this is where God's plan for Groce is achieved.

## Upcoming TL3 Meetings

March – Monday, 3/23

April – Monday, 4/27

May – Tuesday, 5/19

June – Church Family meeting



**Easter Lilies**—The Altar Guild and Flower Girls invite the congregation to help decorate our Altar this Easter with Easter Lilies. If you have a loved one you would like to honor or remember this season, please fill out a **Lily form** (located at the back of the Sanctuary) and submit your **\$9** to the office no later than March 31.

## Schedule Updates

**Canasta Card Club**—Date change—Now meeting the first and third Monday of each month at 1:00pm in Asbury Lobby (March 2 meeting will be in Asbury Hall). Contact **Linda Lankton** for more info. (828-231-5443 or lanktonlinda53@gmail.com)



**Crafty Critters**—Time and location change—Now meeting at 1:30pm in Asbury Lobby, through March. Contact **Pam Rogalski** for more information (pamr72004@yahoo.com)

**Chancel Choir Practice**—Time change—Now at 5:30pm on Wednesdays.

## Don't forget!



Daylight saving time will begin again on Sunday, March 8, when clocks are set forward one hour at 2 am, marking the start of longer evenings.

# Upcoming Events

## GAME

Fun, Laughter,  
and Fellowship!



Everyone is  
Welcome!

## NIGHT

Groce United Methodist Church  
954 Tunnel Rd. Asheville

**FREE  
ENTRY!**



Friday  
March  
20th

—  
Start  
7.00 PM



In Asbury  
Hall

## BAKE SALE

~ SARAH CIRCLE ~



March 29, 2026

Sold before and after the 10:30am  
Worship service



## The Prom Dress & Exchange

**FREE prom dresses and men's suits**

(free shoes, handbags and jewelry too)  
(women's suits and separates available,  
as well as men's tuxedos, suits, slacks, jackets, shirts, vests, and  
ties)

Friday 3/6 2-6pm  
Saturday 3/7 10-6pm  
Sunday 3/8 12-4pm

Groce UMC 954 Tunnel Rd Asheville 28805

donations accepted - volunteers welcome - sewist needed  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0844ACAB2DA0F85-61406288-theprom#/>

contact [dressupsuitup4free@gmail.com](mailto:dressupsuitup4free@gmail.com)  
501c3 [chancesforchildrenCarolinas.com/promdress/](https://chancesforchildrenCarolinas.com/promdress/)  
[www.facebook.com/thepromdressexchange/](https://www.facebook.com/thepromdressexchange/)  
[@dressup\\_suitup](https://www.facebook.com/thepromdressexchange/)

# Birthdays & Anniversaries

03/01 Rachel Burgin  
03/03 Jane Williams  
03/04 Tom Kuhn  
03/06 Win Williamson  
03/10 Debbie Bailey  
03/11 Brooke Huntley  
Addie Morris  
03/12 Brandee Morris  
03/17 Sandra Crouch  
03/19 Carolyn Barber  
03/22 Madeline Shatley  
03/24 Bill Ross  
03/28 Leo Rhein  
Jenn Shatley  
03/29 Linda Geer  
03/30 Sharon Gibbs  
03/31 Jean Bailey  
Patrick Guilfoyle  
Doug Jones



03/25 Jerry and Pat Kirschner (4)

03/26 Loran and Sandra Justus (60!)



World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice.

It is symbolized by an annual day of celebration – the first Friday of March – to which all people are welcome. Find out more at [worlddayofprayer.net](http://worlddayofprayer.net)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
1 9:00 Agape 10:30 Worship 4:00 Confirmation 5:00 Youth	2 11:00 Prayer Group 11:00 Staff Meeting 1:00 Canasta 3:00 Handbells 7:00 Beekeepers	3 10:00 Parkinsons 11:00 Lenten Book Club 1:30 Crafters 1:30 Tai Chi 7:00 SMBB	4 4:00 Nurture 5:30 Choir 6:00 AA	5 10:30 Isaac Group 1:30 Tai Chi 5:00 Welcome Table 6:30 UMM	6 World Day of Prayer Prom Dress Exchange 	7 Prom Dress Exchange	
8 Daylight Savings Starts! Prom Dress Exchange 9:00 Agape 10:30 Worship 4:00 Confirmation 5:00 Youth	9 11:00 Prayer Group 3:00 Handbells 6:00 Girl Scouts 6:00 Guitar League	10 11:00 Lenten Book Club 1:30 Crafters 1:30 Tai Chi 7:00 SMBB 7:00 BH Exec	11 5:15 UMM@VRQ 5:30 Choir 6:00 AA	12 10:30 Isaac Group 1:30 Tai Chi 5:00 Welcome Table	13 6:00 Quintet	14	
15 UMCOR Sunday 9:00 Agape 10:30 Worship 4:00 Confirmation 5:00 Youth	16 11:00 Prayer Group 1:00 Canasta 3:00 Handbells	17 11:00 Lenten Book Club 1:30 Crafters 1:30 Tai Chi 3:00 Miriam Circle 7:00 SMBB	18 10:00 Sarah Circle 5:30 Choir 6:00 AA	19 10:30 Isaac Group 1:30 Tai Chi 5:00 Welcome Table	20 1 <sup>st</sup> Day of Spring 7:00 Game Night 	21	
22 9:00 Agape 10:30 Worship 4:00 Confirmation 5:00 Youth 5:00 HCCA Potluck	23 11:00 Prayer Group 3:00 Handbells 6:00 TL3 6:00 Girl Scouts	24 11:00 Outreach 11:00 Lenten Book Club 1:30 Crafters 1:30 Tai Chi 6:00 BR Basket Guild 7:00 SMBB	25 10:00 Balance 11:30 Tables of 16 4:00 BCAA 5:30 Choir 6:00 AA	26 10:30 Isaac Group 1:30 Tai Chi 5:00 Welcome Table	27 6:00 Quintet	28 10:00 Guitar League	
29 Palm Sunday 9:00 Agape 10:30 Worship Sarah Circle Bake Sale	30 Holy Week 11:00 Prayer Group 3:00 Handbells	31 Holy Week 11:00 Lenten Book Club 1:30 Crafters 1:30 Tai Chi 7:00 SMBB					<h1>MARCH 2026</h1>