



The Messenger

Grace United Methodist
Church

16 Hillcrest Drive
Ravena, NY 12143

(518) 756-6688

Email: graceumcravena@statetel.com

Website: www.gumcravena.com

Rev. Kim Krause, Pastor

Working together to put our faith and love into practice.

**Services are held at 9:30am - Parking Lot Grace FM-89.7,
Temporary Sanctuary & Facebook**

APRIL 2024

FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR

Dear Family and Friends of Grace UMC,

March ended with the Resurrection of Jesus. We are now in a season of new life, of being a new creation, of God making all things new. But we are also in a waiting time – waiting to hear from the county about the subdivision of the land, waiting to hear from the district and conference as to whether or not Grace will be allowed to sell “Lot B” of 20 Hillcrest Drive. So, what do we do as we continue to wait? What is a faithful response to all this uncertainty?

I believe that our faithful response is to keep going. We spent Lent in the series *Cultivating and Letting Go*, where we began to look at the places, feelings and characteristics that we would like to cultivate and letting go of those things that were keeping us from living more fully into our Christian calling – to love others as God loves us. Over the next six weeks we have an opportunity to

continue our work of being made new, being made a new creation, through a series called *Holy Vessels*. It was originally created for the season of Lent, but we are modifying it to be a continuation of *Cultivating and Letting Go*, where we continue to become a new creation, each and every day.

Holy Vessels is based on the healing stories of Jesus as portrayed in the Gospel of Matthew. This series was created in 2021, the year after Covid started and our world changed radically. From Worship Design studio: "Each of us is created a precious and holy vessel of embodied love. We have been through a harrowing time since last Lent that has shattered our sense of wholeness— body, mind, and spirit—like a glass vessel fractured into pieces. In this Lenten "season of recovery" for our physical, communal, mental, intellectual, and environmental health, we will explore the healing narratives of Jesus that tell of divine solidarity with human suffering and remind us that we can begin a journey toward making something beautiful from that which is seemingly broken. Beach glass offers us a multifaceted symbol of this transformative process." We will be adjusting this series to use from the Sunday after Easter through the Sunday before Pentecost (May 19th).

We will continue to become new creations through cultivating, letting go, naming brokenness in ourselves, our community and our world, and working on healing and wholeness. May we continue to grow into the disciples that God needs us to be in such a hurting world. May we continue to share God's love to all those we meet.

It's a hard road. But we never go it alone. May we continue to work together to put our faith and love into practice and action.



DISTRICT DAYS WITH BISHOP HÉCTOR A. BURGOS NÚÑEZ
APRIL 9 AND APRIL 10

Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez is visiting local churches in all 12 districts from February to April. District Days are a way for the bishop to meet with laity and clergy across Upper New York. There is a special time for the clergy from 1 PM to 3 PM and a time for laity (and for clergy who can't attend in the afternoon) from 7 PM to 8:30 PM. All United Methodists of Upper New York are invited and encouraged to attend a gathering closest to you. Bishop Héctor will visit Shenendehowa UMC in the Albany District on Tuesday, April 9. The church is located at 971 Route 146 in Clifton Park. He will visit the Community United Methodist Church of Chestertown in the Adirondack District on Wednesday, April 10. The church is located at 11 Church St., Chestertown. You can attend either event regardless of the district that your church is located in.



5 Blake Frazee
7 Victoria Youmans
8 Logan Lambert
9 Matt Baumbach
10 Caelin Gordon-Stacey
14 Abigail Kennedy

21 Will & Linda Somers
26 Katie Beswick
27 Tracy Harris
28 Lionel Harris
30 Sidney Young

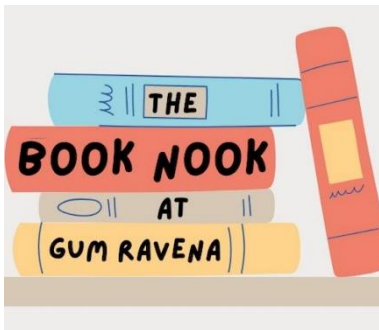
APRIL 2024 SPECIAL DAYS

Some of the special days celebrated in April are:

- Earth Day — April 22, 2024
- Administrative Professionals Day — April 24, 2024

BARGAIN SHED

The Bargain Shed is open for the season! Tuesdays and Saturdays from 9:00am-Noon. We're having a bag sale!! Everything in the shop except jewelry is \$5.00/bag for a regular size grocery shopping bag. Please bring your own bag!!



The Book Nook is open Tuesday and Saturday mornings from 9:00 am – Noon. Thanks to everyone who help us further our education mission.

We're Spring cleaning at the Book Nook with sales in April to clear out old books to have room for new ones. For March:



- Books and DVDs/CDs are Buy 2, Get 1 FREE
- Children's books are their usual 25 cents or 5 for \$1
- Short romance is its usual 25 cents or 5 for \$1
- Puzzles are \$1 each or 3 for \$2
- Duplicate copies of books are 4 for \$1 or 25 cents each

We are taking donations during the sale months but try to limit novels to those published within the past ten years (check the copyright date inside) and no library discards, please. As always, we don't take encyclopedias, textbooks, legal, medical/health, or computer books (most are out of date).

SUPERIMPOSED LOVE

Maybe you've heard how salvation is like a total solar eclipse: God doesn't see our sins because Jesus' holiness covers them completely. Or maybe you've heard how trials can cause an "eclipse of faith."

At WorldChallenge.org, Pastor Gary Wilkerson explains that in Greek, *eclipse* means "I am absent" or "I cease to exist," because people once thought the gods temporarily extinguished the sun. "For Christians, a 'spiritual eclipse' is a dark hour when God seems to be absent from our lives," Wilkerson writes.

Wilkerson points to Peter being sifted like wheat, Elijah and Jeremiah facing extreme discouragement, and David collapsing morally. Amid Satan's attacks, "God seems completely absent," writes the pastor. "In that dark moment of eclipse, the devil has

created such chaos we can't possibly see a way out." During times of testing, Christians must cry out to God and trust his faithfulness.

Completing the eclipse analogy, Wilkerson shares Titus 3:4, the "love of God our Savior appeared" (NIV). The Greek meaning of *appeared* here is *superimposed*, he writes. God looks on our fraught-filled times of eclipse and "superimposes his divine love over us."

Springtime, new life, resurrection, hope. God, help me hold onto an Easter focus all season long.

WHEN IT RAINS

The skeleton flower, a perennial native to Japan, has delicate petals that change from opaque white to almost transparent when wet. After it rains, only the flower's intricate, skeleton-like veins are visible.

When the rains come (and they will!) in our lives, the same can be said. Amid difficulty and struggle, our true selves often become more transparent. During a parenting challenge, criticism might emerge. Or while we tackle a tough work project, impatience might rear its ugly head.

Hosea 6:3 (NLT) proclaims: "Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring." The rains will come. Whether you're experiencing light rain or a downpour, ponder what the water reveals. Then ask God how you can be more open to his work in that area.

Following the 'Perfect Fool'

Theologian Frederick Buechner, who died at age 96 in 2022, explored how the “foolishness of God” (see 1 Corinthians 1:25) compares to human wisdom. He pondered the safety stickers that warn, “The life you save may be your own.”

“That is the wisdom of [humans] in a nutshell,” wrote Buechner. “What God says, on the other hand, is ‘The life you save is the life you lose.’ In other words, the life you clutch, hoard, guard and play safe with is in the end a life worth little to anybody, including yourself, and only a life given away for love’s sake is a life worth living.”

Buechner continued, “To bring his point home, God shows us a man who gave his life away to the extent of dying a national disgrace without a penny in the bank or a friend to his name. In terms of [human] wisdom, he was a Perfect Fool, and anybody who thinks [they] can follow him without [being] something like the same kind of a fool ... is laboring under not a cross but a delusion.”

BIBLE QUIZ



What does the newly risen Jesus tell his disciples — twice — when he appears in the locked room where they are hiding?

- A. “Love one another as I have loved you.”
- B. “Peace be with you.”
- C. “The last shall be first and the first shall be last.”
- D. “I am risen!”

Answer: B (See John 20:19, 21.)

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If you are on Facebook, please join the Church page by liking us at Grace United Methodist Church, Ravena, NY. Find out what's happening each week, including meetings and special events. Or visit us on the web at: www.gumcravena.com