Grand AveNews

June 2026

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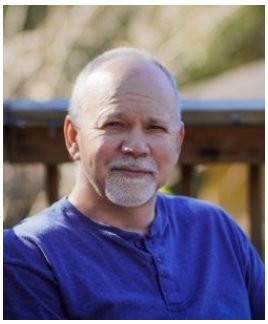
Building Faith,
Bringing Hope,
Reaching Out in Love

Grand Avenue
United Methodist Church
Hot Springs, AR
501-623-5626

Arkansas Annual Conference 2026

The Arkansas Annual Conference will meet June 15-17 in Horner Hall at the Hot Springs Convention Center. The conference theme "The Way of Love: Flowing as One" is inspired by Ephesians 5:1-2—"Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." All sessions will be live-streamed on our Conference YouTube channel — https://www.youtube.com/@ArkansasUMC. A complete schedule of events is available here: https://arumc.org/ac-2026/

Learning Session — We are thrilled to welcome Rev. Dr. Paul Chilcote who will lead two learning sessions on Tuesday, June 16, at 1:30 p.m. and Wednesday, June 17, at 9:15 a.m.



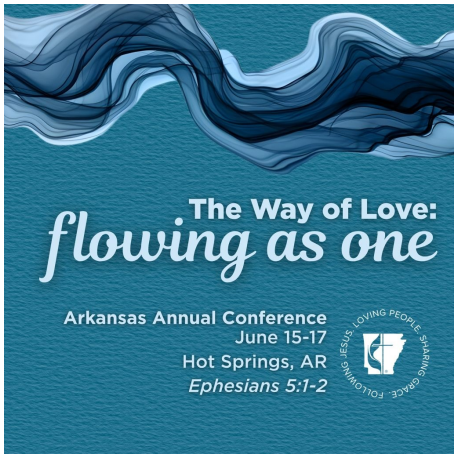
A respected Methodist historian, theologian, and award-winning author, Dr. Chilcote served as Director of the Centre for Global Wesleyan Theology at Wesley House, Cambridge, and continues as an Honorary Lifetime Fellow. Author or editor of nearly forty books, his work focuses on Wesleyan theology, spirituality, discipleship, and church renewal.

Ordination Service — We are honored to welcome Bishop Mande Muyombo as the preacher for this year's Ordination Service on Tuesday, June 16, at 5:30 p.m. in Horner Hall.

Bishop Mande serves as bishop of the North Katanga Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church, the denomination's largest episcopal area, encompassing more than one million members across three annual conferences. He currently chairs the UMC Connectional Table and is widely recognized for his commitment to holistic ministry, combining spiritual leadership with community development through investments in education, healthcare, clean water, agriculture, and infrastructure.

Born in Kambove, Democratic Republic of Congo, Bishop Mande was the first of 16 children in his family to graduate from college. A graduate of Africa University and Saint Paul School of Theology, he holds degrees in theology, peace and governance, and ministry. Before his election as bishop, he served as president of Kamina Methodist University and held several leadership roles with the UMC General Board of Global Ministries.

Special Events Hosted by Grand Ave UMC — We are honored once again to host the Clergy Women's Luncheon on Tuesday at noon and the Creation Care Breakfast on Wednesday at 7:00. Thank you to our members who are helping to prepare and serve. Profits from the meals will benefit our feeding ministries.



Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

Ephesians 5:1-2 NIV

Annual Conference 2026 Schedule

Monday, June 15:

- 7:30 a.m. – Registration Opens
- 9 a.m. – Laity Session in Rooms 207-209
- 9 a.m. – Clergy Session in Horner Hall
- 10:30 a.m. – Opening Worship
- Noon – Lunch Break
- 1:30 p.m. – Business Session
- 3 p.m. – Clergy Coffee Break
- 3:15 p.m. – Episcopal Address
- 4 p.m. – Business Session

Tuesday, June 16:

- 8:15 a.m. – Worship
- 8:30 a.m. – Laity and Youth Addresses
- 8:50 a.m. – Business Session
- 10:15 a.m. – BOM Report
- 10:45 Break – Retirees Honored in Lobby
- 11:00 a.m. – Retiree Recognition
- Noon – Lunch Break
- 1:30 p.m. – Learning Session with Rev. Paul Chilcote
- 2:15 p.m. – Breakout Sessions
- 3:15 p.m. – Business Session
- 4:15 p.m. – Break
- 5:30 p.m. – Ordination in Horner Hall

Wednesday, June 17:

- 8:15 a.m. – Worship
- 8:30 a.m. – Business Session
- 9:15 a.m. – Learning Session with Rev. Paul Chilcote
- 10 a.m. – Breakout Sessions
- 11 a.m. – Service of Remembrance
- Noon – Lunch Break
- 1:30 p.m. – Business Session
- 2:15 p.m. – Setting of Appointments, Sending Forth and Closing Worship

God's Creative Connection: Continuing the Journey

As we continue our worship series, God's Creative Connection, we are discovering that God has always found creative ways to bring hope, healing, and connection into situations that seem broken or uncertain.

In the coming weeks, we will explore three memorable stories from Genesis. We will meet Hagar and Ishmael, who find themselves alone in the wilderness after being cast aside. Yet even there, God sees them, hears their cries, and provides for their needs. Their story reminds us that no one is forgotten by God.

We will also wrestle with the challenging story of Abraham and Isaac, a story that raises difficult questions about trust, faith, and obedience. In the midst of uncertainty, Abraham discovers that God is present and provides what is needed.

Finally, we will follow the story of Isaac and Rebekah, seeing how God works through ordinary relationships and everyday decisions to fulfill extraordinary promises.

Though these stories are very different, they share a common theme: when people encounter fear, separation, or uncertainty, God creates new possibilities for life and connection. The same God who guided these families continues to work in our lives today. God still sees those who feel forgotten, still provides for those facing uncertainty, and still draws people together in community.

We invite you to join us as we continue exploring how God's creative Spirit is at work—in Scripture, in our congregation, and in our daily lives.

Pastor David Fleming

Outreach News!

Our United Methodist Outreach Thrift Store is always full of bargains, but the week of June 29 to July 3, we will be having a sale like none before!

EVERYTHING in the store will be discounted fifty percent! This includes clothing and shoes, household items, toys and books, lamps and furniture and artwork. Please stop by and check it out! The Outreach Store is located at 116 Albert Pike Road. Hours are Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and Mondays and Saturdays from 10:00 am to 1:30 pm.

Remember, we can always use donations of good, clean used clothing, shoes and housewares. And we are always looking for more volunteers. For additional information, contact the church office at (501)623-5626.

Proceeds from our sales buy groceries for those in our community who are experiencing food insecurity.

Carol Dickinson

Seasonal Update for Ouachita Children's Center

Lazy hazy days of summer are now here and teens at Ouachita Children's Center (OCC) and elsewhere are anxious to be outdoors to sunbathe, swim, "dunk a few, make a goal, or hit one over the fence."

Because the rainman can want equal time, the sun screen can be shelved, while our other requested donations of cards and games will be used to challenge minds, pass time, and foster friendships.

Our donated items (hair ties, sun screen, cards and games were taken to the OCC facility on June 8, 2026.

Beverly Ortigara and Sammie Grace

TABLE OF GRACE CELEBRATES 8 YEARS

Nine years ago an exploratory committee was created to look at the possibility of serving a mission dinner at Grand Avenue on a regular basis. That committee studied ways to do that and visited a number of similar operations around the state to learn what works and what we should avoid. The recommendation from that committee to the Administrative Council was to serve a weekly meal on Sunday evenings beginning the first Sunday in June, 2018.

Five work teams were created, one for each Sunday of the month and one to cover 5th Sundays which occur 4 times a year. Volunteers were solicited for the various tasks that had to be covered. Many of those original volunteers are still serving as we celebrate eight years of success. It takes a small army to keep Table of Grace running as many additional activities have been added over the years. We currently have 80 volunteers and substitutes who serve on various teams.

Each Sunday evening at 4:30 we begin with singing, worship and communion led by Pastor David and his helpers. At 5:00 the food service begins and we serve hearty, delicious meals to everyone who comes. The numbers have fluctuated widely over the years, especially during the COVID years (when we served 300 plus take outs every week), but we currently serve 100-150 meals each week, even more towards the end of the month when folks' money is getting low.

Table of Grace is not part of the regular church budget. We have been blessed to have no worries about finance because of generous donations from those who support the program, both within the church and without.

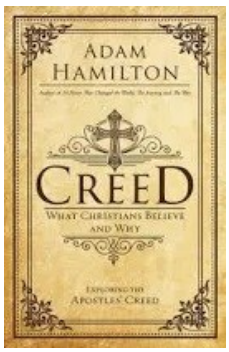
Over the years we have added additional giveaways. Morris and Shari Coston go each Friday morning to a local bread distributor and pick up a truckload of bread which is given away on Sunday evening. At times we have also given away children's books, shoes, coats, blankets, toys, reading glasses and Holiday Treats.

Most of all, we don't just feed our guests. They have become family and we treat them as such. We share hard times and celebrate good times, pray for each other and enjoy our time together.

Table of Grace is a special place!

Mary Tom Taylor

Open Door Class Begins New Study



The Open Door class will begin studying "CREED" by Adam Hamilton. Rather than simply stating what Christians believe, Hamilton explores **why these beliefs developed, what they mean today, and how they can shape everyday life**. The book invites readers to engage thoughtfully with faith, whether they are lifelong Christians, new believers, or people who are questioning and searching.

A key takeaway is that the Creed is not merely a list of doctrines to memorize; it is a guide to understanding God's relationship with humanity and finding direction and hope in a complex world.

All are welcome to join us.

Jeanette Pratt

Welcome New Members!

Grand Avenue extends a warm welcome to **Shar Becker**. Shar was born and raised in Mundelein, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. Following her graduation from high school, Shar enrolled in North Illinois University where she earned a Bachelor's degree in political science international relations.

While at university she met Steve Becker. They married in 1986 and have two sons. One son is currently in the military and lives in Colorado Springs. The other son lives in Woodlands, Texas.

Shar worked for 38 years in the supermarket, food, and packaging industry, and she is now retired. Shar is a Master Gardener, loves to read, and enjoys creating mosaics.

Shar loves living in Hot Springs and is excited to be a member of GAUMC. She came to Grand Avenue at the invitation of Sheila McLarty and was warmly welcomed. She says that during her first communion here, she was moved when Pastor David invited ALL to come to the table because it is God's table. She feels connected to our church family and has found her church home.

Grand Avenue also welcomes our newest member, **Dakota Tessendorf**. Dakota was born in Benton and raised in Lonsdale, Arkansas. He went to school at Benton until high school when he enrolled at Hot Springs High School.

Dakota's work schedule doesn't leave a lot of room for hobbies or other activities. He does enjoy going to movies with friends and expressed an interest in collecting things (he's unsure of what to collect) in the future. He also expressed an interest in enrolling in college when his work schedule permits. He currently works at WalMart.

When asked how he discovered GAUMC, Dakota says that one Saturday he was standing outside the building waiting for the bus when a thought entered his head saying "I'm going to go there tomorrow." He attended worship the very next day and also attended Table of Grace that evening. He volunteers with Table of Grace when he has a Sunday off. He said he is happy to be a member of our church family. Welcome, Dakota! We're happy you are here!

Worship with Us on Independence Day Weekend

Join us Sunday, July 5, as we commemorate 250 years of American freedom and democracy. Through worship, prayer, scripture, and music, we will give thanks for our nation's blessings, acknowledge our ongoing challenges, and seek God's healing for a divided world. Come celebrate, reflect, and pray with us as we ask God to "heal our land."

Love Boldly

To follow Christ, we boldly love
Not only those we like,
But every living Child of God—
The "good" and "bad" alike.

If we salute only our kin
How better then are we
Than those we may look down upon—
Those "unjust" that we see.

A love that's unconditional
Is Godlike, and it's hard.
From rash disputes and jealousies
We must be on our guard.

So do not harm your enemies.
Love them, the Scriptures say.
Through Kindness and Humility
Reflect the Savior's Way.

Such perfect Love is very hard;
It takes maturity—
A willingness to sacrifice
In order to be free.

Free of the hate and bigotry
That plagues our world today.
So boldly love the "undeserved."
Share grace—it is His Way.

Steve Jennings

Memorials

In memory of…

Charlotte Anthony
- by Jeanne Dean
- by Pat & Bob Heusel

Richard Hughen
- by Phyllis & Alan Bear
- by Patty & Joe Currey
- by Sheryl Dreiling

Martha Dale Cooley
- by Donald Pullen
- by Jamie Williams
- by William & Shannon Ahlbrandt
- by Barry & Rebecca Allen
- by Kay Furo
- by Charles & Tracy Freeman
- by Donald & Moorene Massey
- by Terry & Sheila McLarty
- by The Progressive Club of Hot Springs
- by Linda Stanley
- by Larry Williams
- by S B Bernard, Jr.
- by Kay & Skip Holland
- by Patricia & Bob Heusel
- by Patsy & Larry Louden
- by Elaine & Bill Pathmann
- by Mary Schnipper
- by Nitalynn & Robert Sigman
- by Linda Tabor
- by Gwen Stephens

Outreach is collecting one pound bags of rice during June, and tuna or Treet during July.

Striving for Victory Class Feeds College Ministry Students

The Striving for Victory Sunday School Class from Grand Avenue United Methodist Church sponsored the evening meal at the Wesley Foundation in Arkadelphia, Arkansas in April. Chicken spaghetti, garden salad, cheesy bread, homemade cookies, and drinks were on the menu. Jane Oliver and Sammie Grace delivered the food and represented the class. Pastor Michelle Amos said the students really enjoyed the meal. The Wesley Foundation is a United Methodist Campus Ministry serving Henderson State University and Ouachita Baptist University.

Pictured right: Jane Oliver, Pastor Michelle Amos, Sammie Grace

Circle of Grace Silent Auction

Our silent auction was a fundraising event hosted by Circle of Grace on Thursday, May 7, 2026. We made over $200.00 to donate toward the Methodist Family Health Foundation, Backpacks, Outreach, and Camp Aldersgate for 2026. We enjoyed a salad luncheon, silent auction, and fellowship. Our Circle will be taking the summer off but will return in September. We welcome you to join us on the first Thursday of the month at 1:00 pm in our fellowship hall starting in September. The United Women in Faith Vision is turning faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of women, children, and youth around the world.

GAUMC Has Two Varieties of Hyssop in our Pollinator Garden

Yes, hyssop is mentioned multiple times in the Bible. I appears primarily in the Old Testament, where it is associated with purification rituals and ceremonial cleansings. Notably, in Exodus, hyssop was used during the Passover to apply the blood of the lamb to the doorposts, symbolizing protection from the plague. In the New Testament, it is referenced in John 19:29 when hyssop was used to lift a sponge soaked in vinegar to Jesus' lips.

Symbolic Significance

Hyssop symbolizes cleansing and removal of impurity, representing a transition from sin to holiness. It serves as a reminder of God's ability to purify and redeem.

Cultural Context

The plant is native to the Mediterranean region and has been historically significant in various religious practices.

Sheila McLarty

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We're Here to Serve You

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Kid-Friendly Breakfast & Lunch Items Needed

Since school is out, many kids will lose their free breakfast and lunch. You can help by donating kid-friendly items or a monetary donation to our Blessing Box. Suggested items are listed below:

- Applesauce Cups/Pouches
- Individual Fruit Cups/Cans
- Cereal Bars
- Individual Cereal Servings
- Mac & Cheese Cups
- Individual Soups
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Ramen Noodles
- Peanut Butter Crackers
- Juice Boxes/Pouches
- Water