



# Grand AveNews

February 2026

## Join us for our Lenten Worship Series: Cross / Fit — A Workout for the Soul

### Inside This Issue

New Study for Lent	2
Lenten Luncheon Series	3
A Word of Thanks	4
A Poem for February	5
Favorite Hymn Survey	5
Spiritual Practice for Lent	5
Ash Wednesday Worship	6

we LOVE  
because  
HE first  
loved us

1 JOHN 4:19



Building Faith,  
Bringing Hope,  
Reaching Out in  
*love*

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

“CrossFit” is a fitness regimen established by Greg Glassman and Lauren Jenai in 2000. It is both a physical exercise philosophy and a competitive fitness sport, incorporating elements from high-intensity interval training, Olympic weightlifting, gymnastics, and other exercises. Hour-long classes at affiliated gyms, or “boxes,” typically include a warm-up, a skill development segment, the high-intensity “workout of the day” (or WOD), and a period of individual or group stretching. The first CrossFit affiliate gym (or “box” as they call it) was in 2000. Fifteen years later, there were nearly 13,000 affiliates boxes worldwide. And, although the global COVID pandemic and other factors led to its plateau and subsequent decline, the movement is still strong.

Moreover, CrossFit does a tremendous job of building community. In CrossFit gyms around the world, you will see people not only excited about gathering together at the gym, but also developing close friendships outside of the gym, bringing meals to each other when someone is sick or grieving, going to each other's graduations and weddings. Of course, all of this is suggestive of the kind of community that the church has been called to build from its very beginning. This year's Lenten journey gives us an opportunity to get back to basics.

***Just as CrossFit is a workout for the body, our worship series for this Lenten season is a workout for the soul.***

- February 22– “The need for Change” (Psalm 32; Matthew 4:1-11) will remind us that we face temptation as we discern what God really wants for us.
- March 1 – Reset Gen. 12:1–4a; John 3:1–17 will remind us that spiritual rebirth means a new start.
- March 8 – “Hydrate” (Exodus 17:1-7; John 4:5-42) will remind us that Living water sustains us on our journey.
- March 15 – “Redefined” (1 Samuel 16:1-13; John 9:1-41 ) will remind us that we are more than we appear to be.
- March 22 – “Dead End” (Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 11:1-45) will celebrate that when all hope seems lost, God revives.
- March 29 – “Celebrate and Wait” (Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Matthew 21:1-11) will invite us to rejoice at the end of the journey, but also to remember that challenges lie ahead.

Along the way, we have a lot we can learn from “CrossFit” affiliates. More than 2 Billion people have flocked to CrossFit, seeking not only physical fitness, but also the community that it provides. Indeed, they come because 1) CrossFit is a place of unconditional acceptance 2) CrossFit is a place of unconditional encouragement and 3) CrossFit is a place of continual accountability. We hope that you will be with us in worship each Sunday and that you will join us in incorporating these principles in our weekly workout as we build the Body of Christ this Lent!



The early Christians observed the days of Christ's passion and resurrection with great devotion, and it became the custom of the church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation. This was a time when converts were prepared for holy baptism. It was also a time when those who had committed serious sins and separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by repentance and forgiveness. Finally, it was a period of quiet reflection, fasting, and prayer for all Christians, a sort of "tithing of time" since the season is approximately one tenth of a year.

The gathering of the people of God on Ash Wednesday dates from the early medieval era. Historically, ashes have been a powerful symbol. They are used extensively in the Old Testament as a symbol of sadness, repentance, and humility. Job, in the midst of all his troubles, cried out to God from the ash heap. In the book of Jonah, the King of Nineveh sat in ashes as a sign of repentance. The use of ashes serves as a reminder of our mortality. Each of us faces the inevitability of physical death. Our bodies and all our possessions eventually will return to dust and ashes. Thus, the use of ashes reminds us that we dare not trust in things that will not last, but in God alone.

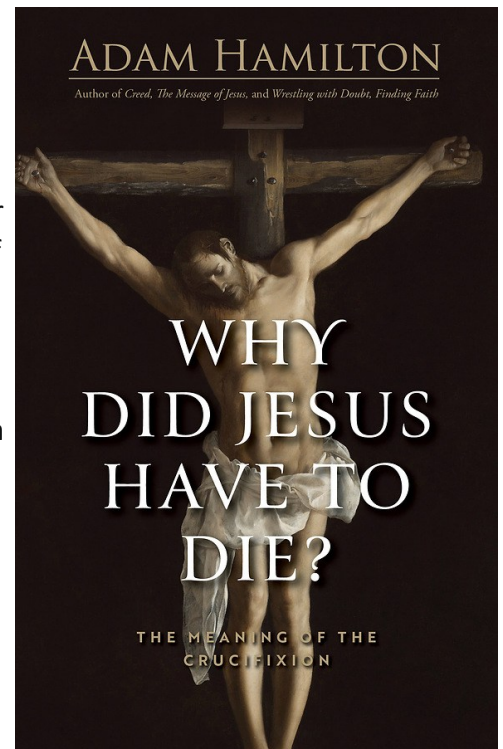
## Join the Open Door Class for a Special Lenten Study

**When words fall short, the cross still speaks.**

Despite the crucifixion's central place in Christian faith, the New Testament offers few clear answers about how Jesus' death saves, or why, exactly, he had to die. The New Testament writers use a host of metaphors—ransom, sacrifice, reconciliation, victory—but never explain exactly how it works or why it had to happen this way.

What if that's because we've been asking the wrong question? What if the cross isn't a transaction to be explained, but a living Word from God meant to transform who we are and how we live?

On Sunday mornings during the season of Lent, the Open Door Class will journey through Adam Hamilton's "Why Did Jesus Have to Die? — The Meaning of the Crucifixion." You are invited to join them beginning Sunday, February 22. The class meets in Fellowship Hall beginning at 9:45 am. For more information, contact Jeanette Pratt or call the church office at 501-623-5626.



*“Jesus came to reveal God’s heart,  
not change it.”*

# *Songs for the Journey:*

## Praying the Psalms through Lent

Each Monday in Lent, you are invited to gather as a faith community. Worship begins in the host sanctuary at 12:05pm and a simple lunch follows.

Feb

**23**

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
with Rev. Leslie Roper

March

**2**

Oaklawn United Methodist Church  
with Rev. David Fleming

March

**9**

First United Methodist Church  
with Rev. Mark Nabors

March

**16**

Grand Avenue United Methodist Church  
with Rev. Carl McCormack

March

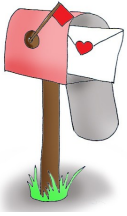
**23**

St. Luke's Episcopal Church  
with Rev. Tonya Hancock

March

**30**

First Presbyterian Church  
with Rev. J. J. Galloway



Dear Congregation Members,

For those who have come to our shelters, the holidays are not always experienced with joy and hope. In fact, the holidays have been painful and possibly even dangerous for those in our community who are in crisis. Poverty, abuse, dysfunction, and neglect are a common theme with those we serve. Residents in our children's and domestic violence shelters, as well as youth that are at risk for homelessness, who are with us during the holidays are introduced to safety and care from our staff, but also generosity and love from people like you who truly work to make a difference.

Thank you for your thoughtful in-kind gifts of Christmas gift boxes for our children's shelter residents, received on December 18, 2025. We know you have many options for your donations, and we are thankful you have thought of Ouachita Children, Youth, and Family Services this year. As we close out 2025, we wanted you to know that we are doing everything we can, despite this year's challenges, to empower those we serve to work toward a safer and brighter future.

You have made this dark world a much brighter and safer space for our community, and on the behalf of those who seek our services, we want you to know that we are profoundly grateful.

Sincerely,

*Ashley Thompson*  
Executive Director

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Dear Grand Avenue Church Family,

Joe and I are so blessed to be a part of this church family. You opened your hearts and sent up prayers for healing and comfort for both of us. With each positive test or lab, your prayers were felt.

Your prayers, care and concern, cards, and calls meant so much to both of us. The good food helped Joe stay nourished. Thank you,

Love in Christ,

*Carol & Joe Peters*

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Grand Avenue United Methodist Church,

We are so grateful for your gifts to the Kairos Prison Ministry. Through your donations, the ministry is able to pursue its mission of ministry to those who are impacted by incarceration. Through the grace of God, and enabled by your gifts, we are working to bring persons lost in shame, guilt, unforgiveness, and hatred to know the healing and saving power of Jesus Christ and a new way of life.

We hope you understand how much your support of this ministry means to the people with whom we come into contact. Lives are touched and new hope is born because God has put our work on your heart. We are eternally grateful and hope that your love for us and our mission in Christ's name might continue.

*Sherry Stringer*

Kairos Prison Ministry International, Inc.

## Sign Replacement

Bob Vidrick has started a project to replace the destroyed GAUMC sign. Please contact Bob through the church office @ (501)623-5626 if you wish to be part of the project team.

**Outreach is collecting cans of  
soup during the month of  
February.**

## A Cold Cold World

As I sit in my comfy house  
And watch the day's snowfall,  
I can reflect on how I'm blessed.  
My problems are so small.

Around the world and in my town  
Are those who suffer much.  
They may have used their last resource  
And need an angel's touch.

It may be that the angels now  
Are overworked elsewhere.  
It falls to those who have been blessed  
To demonstrate their care.

Those who are warm and so well fed  
Can't credit it alone.  
We've all been helped along the way;  
Rich blessings we've been shown.

We all are one bad break away  
From being on the street.  
So try and help your fellow man—  
Humbly without conceit.

For God who sees your efforts here  
Will multiply your plan.  
Though we can't save the world alone,  
We must do what we can.

*Steve Jennings*



## Do You Have a Favorite Hymn?

Beloved hymns are a vital element of our praise and worship of God. During the next season of worship we would like to include some of **your favorites** during Sunday services. Tell us your favorite hymn by filling out this form and placing it in the offering plate. Or you may wish to email the church and tell us your favorite. The complete list will be compiled and used during worship planning.

### My Favorite Hymns:

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### Your Name:

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## Preparing for the Journey: An Invitation to Lenten Practice

Lent is not just something we observe — it's something we enter. As we begin our **Cross / Fit — A Workout for the Soul** journey together, we invite you to prepare your heart, mind, and spirit for this season of transformation. Here are a few simple, meaningful ways to get ready:

- 1. Create space** — Set aside a few intentional minutes each day for prayer, silence, or Scripture. Transformation begins when we make room for God to speak.
- 2. Name your hunger** — Ask yourself: *What am I truly longing for?* Lent helps us recognize what we've been feeding our lives — and what our souls are really craving.
- 3. Practice holy honesty** — Enter Lent with a willingness to be truthful with God about your struggles, habits, fears, and hopes. God's grace meets us in truth, not in pretense.
- 4. Commit to the journey, not perfection** — Lent is not about doing it "right." It's about showing up, staying open, and letting God do the forming work.
- 5. Walk with others** — Spiritual growth happens best in community. Come ready to worship, learn, pray, serve, and grow together as the Body of Christ.

This Lent, we're not just attending worship — we're training our hearts, forming our souls, and building the Body of Christ together.

## Join us for Cross/Fit — A Workout for the Soul



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*We're Here to Serve You*

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Join us for

**Ash Wednesday Worship  
with the Imposition of Ashes**

**Wednesday, February 18 at 6:00 pm**

We begin our Lenten journey to the Cross on Ash Wednesday, February 18. During the service palm fronds from last year's Palm Sunday celebration will be burned. The ashes will then be rubbed on our foreheads in the sign of a cross as a witness to our devotion and to remind us of our human frailty. Plan now to join us for this dramatic and meaningful time of worship.

