

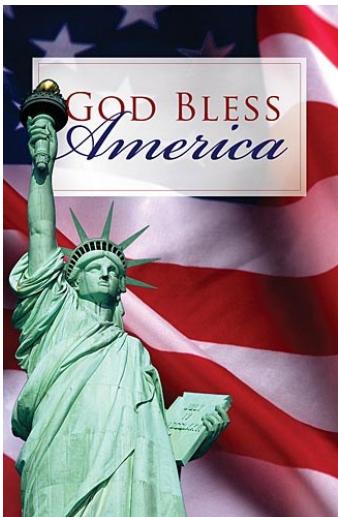
Grand AveNews

July, 2021



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Join Us as We Journey Through Ephesians

Our worship for the rest of July and all of August will focus on key passages from the Letter to the Ephesians. Our journey will help us explore our Christian calling—as individuals, as families, and as the church.

The theme of Ephesians is church unity. It recognizes the world as a place of constant strife — between good and evil (6:12), between God and rebellious humans (2:2), within the church (4:14), within the home (5:21-6:9), and within individuals (4:22-23). Against that background it proclaims that God intends unity, that Christ is God's agent of reconciliation, and that the church is Christ's instrument for accomplishing his mission. It teaches that unity within the church is basic to all other unities. Come join us as we celebrate —

July 11 — “Blessed to Live a Life of Praise” (Ephesians 1:3-14)

“We who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory.” (Ephesians 1:12)

July 18 — “Peace with God and One Another” (Ephesians 2:11-22)

“So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” (Ephesians 2:19)

July 25 — “God’s Love and Power in Us” (Ephesians 3:14-21)

“I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.

(Ephesians 3:16-17)

Greetings from Andrew Fleming

Dear Grand Avenue Friends and Family,



Thank you so much for welcoming me back to be with you all and speak to you all last month. It was such an honor to get to be there with you in person and share some of what I have been learning and doing over the last two years. The work we do together as a church community in a global church is so crucial to caring for all our neighbors. Together we can bring God's love and justice to fruition for all of God's creation. I hope the message I shared with you all of my work has been empowering in the actions you take as a community towards justice. I appreciate all the ways in which you all have supported me, especially with your prayers and with your donations. I look forward to seeing you all again soon as we continue our journey together.

Andrew

Trustees Announce Further COVID Updates

Because of your diligence in observing best practices, Grand Avenue UMC has remained a safe place for people to gather even with the recent increase in COVID cases due to the Delta Variant. While we need to remember that there are people in our midst who have not yet been vaccinated or are at elevated risk, our Trustees have voted to relax our practices even further beginning this month as follows:

- Mask wearing remains optional following CDC guidelines: Those who are fully vaccinated are not required to wear a mask. Those who are not fully vaccinated must wear a mask and practice social distancing. (Seating in classrooms at the back of the Sanctuary will be reserved for those who choose to practice "social distancing.")
- Meals may be served in Fellowship Hall as part of our bereavement ministry, Sunday School classes, or other small groups (up to 40 people) as long as the food is prepared in our kitchen using the proper guidelines or professionally catered. Plates will be served, no buffets.
- Coffee and portioned foods may be served in classrooms on Sunday morning. There will be no other coffee or snack service at this time. Children and youth will continue to be served pre-packaged snacks and beverages. Personal beverages are allowed in a sealed container.
- Greeters will resume their pre-COVID job descriptions. Attendance will be registered on pads placed on each pew in advance and collected after the service.
- Bulletins and other items for distribution will be placed on tables at the entrances to be picked up by those individuals who want them. Offerings will continue to be collected in a box by the Sanctuary door.
- Sanitizing will continue before and after each service for high touch surfaces (doors, light switches, restrooms, and food service areas).

Thank you for your cooperation in continuing to make Grand Avenue a safe and welcoming place with hospitality and respect for all.

Memorials & Honorariums Received in May–June 2021



In memory of

Our mothers by Martha Dale & Dickey Cooley
Ninette Lookabaugh by Jennie Peck
Kenneth B. Tyler by Martha Dale & Dickey Cooley
Dick Stubblefield by Martha Dale & Dickey Cooley
Our fathers, Jo Fleming and Glenn Hefty
by David Fleming & Karla Hefty

In honor of

Our mothers, Mary Fleming and Joann Hefty
by David Fleming and Karla Hefty

What's Your Number?

Most of us have a number for different aspects of our lives. How much do you think you need to retire? How many repetitions do you try to do when you exercise? How many pieces of toast do you fix every morning? How many cups of coffee do you try to limit yourself a day?

What would your number be if you decided to give to your endowment fund on a regular basis? What would the frequency be? What would the amount be? So what would be your number?

A while ago, Martha Dale and I decided to make giving to the endowment fund a regular part of our church giving. We decided to give on a monthly basis. We have a number. It is not a large number, but it is a regular number. What do you think would happen to our endowment fund if a number of us started giving to the endowment fund on a regular basis? It is food for thought as they say. What's your number?

Administrative Council will meet Monday, July 26 at 5:00 p.m. In Fellowship Hall

Annual Conference 2021

"Live with Light" was the theme of this year's annual conference. The event (held June 2-4) was the first-ever hybrid conference with clergy and lay members from around the state joining together for the first time since May 2019. People had the option to attend either in person at Bank OZK Arena here in Hot Springs, or virtually through Zoom.



Grand Avenue was represented by David Fleming, clergy; Karla Hefty, representing Lay Servant Ministries for the southwest district; Carol Dickinson and Jonnie Nix southwest district representatives; and Linda Stanley as your Lay Member. The three-day conference was filled with Business Sessions, Speakers and Presenters, and special services for Worship, Ordination, Retirement, Celebration of Life, and Clergy Appointments.

During the **Business Sessions** several resolutions were adopted:

1. A resolution to recognize Project Transformation as a ministry partner of the Arkansas Conference.
2. A resolution regarding decisions about potential separation, departure, or realignment as an Annual Conference: This resolution would schedule a series of meetings in each district to share and discuss proposed options and hopes for the future. As you probably know there is a great deal of uncertainty about what is to happen within our denomination. General Conference is scheduled for Aug 29 to Sept 6, 2022, and hopefully will provide some answers.
3. A petition to clarify deadlines for presenting petitions to General Conference. Petitions must be postmarked or in the hands of the petitions secretary no later than 230 days before the opening session of General Conference.
4. A proposal to clarify the principles regarding local church requests for disaffiliation: This proposal laid out the process a church would need to go through, (concerning financial assets and property), if that church voted to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church for reasons of conscience regarding a change to the Book of Discipline. The proposal was submitted by the Conference Board of Trustees and was adopted by Annual Conference.

Project Transformation – This project seeks to transform communities by engaging children, college-age young adults, and churches. The college students will serve summer or one-year internships in after-school and summer day camps for children. This innovative ministry will foster young adults as church leaders and strengthen local church collaboration. The camps would be primarily housed in United Methodist churches. The first day camp is scheduled to take place in Pine Bluff.

200,000 More Reasons – 200,000 More Reasons is committed to not only end childhood hunger in Arkansas but to improve family stability and childhood literacy as well. Did you know that 62% of third grade students are reading below proficiency level? Leadership of 200,000 More Reasons has set a new goal that at least 50 percent of congregations offer reading ministries which include food distribution. Congregations can increase access to books, volunteer for school tutoring programs, and/or host out of school literacy programs. Another goal is that 100 percent of congregations participate in reducing childhood hunger. Finally, a third goal is for at least 35% of congregations to promote healthy and stable family life, including substance abuse programs, support groups, and crisis intervention.

Dismantling Racism – Rev. Dr. Erin Beasley and Rev. Dr. F. Willis Johnson presented to the Annual Conference a discussion on racism and the church. A new booklet produced by the Arkansas Conference, "Having the Conversation: A devotional series for dismantling the sin of racism and building God's reconciliation" was shared. The booklet

(Continued on page 4)

features devotions written by Arkansas clergy and laity dealing with racism and is meant to start the conversation about dismantling racism and building reconciliation in our local churches.

Fresh Expressions - Rev. Dr. Michael Beck, pastor of Wildwood United Methodist Church, spoke to us from Florida on Fresh Expressions...a form of church for our changing culture primarily for the benefit of people who are not members of any church.

Wildwood has a brick and mortar building just like Grand Avenue. But they also have satellite groups in unusual places. Members of Wildwood carry the light of Christ out into the community to places where they have relationships with others. For example, one 80 year old member visits the dog park every day and has formed friendships with others at the park. He gradually introduced Jesus to the group by asking, "Do you mind if I share a Jesus story." After sharing the story he would ask, "If this story happened today, what would it look like?" After a while, he began telling a Jesus story and praying for the group. Over time singing, communion and baptism were added. Thus, the group evolved as a small group satellite of the Wildwood church. At the moment Wildwood has 15 Fresh Expressions locations, including: "Burritos and Bibles" at Moe's Southwest Grill, "Paws for Praise" at The BarkPark Dog Park, Yoga Church, "Taste of Grace" Dinner Church, Fat Kats Artistry Tattoo Church, Digital Church, and others. Rev. Beck says that we must create a blended ecology of church...BOTH traditional church with deep roots AND wild branches of Fresh Expressions groups. Because, of course, the main thing is to introduce people to Jesus and expand the kingdom of God.

Clergy Appointment - Finally, we are blessed that the cabinet has appointed David Fleming to Grand Avenue for another year of ministry. We look forward to working with Pastor David and Karla to live in the light and to carry that light out into the world.



Table of Grace Home Deliveries

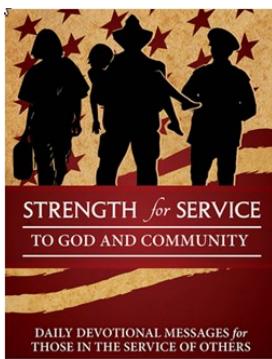
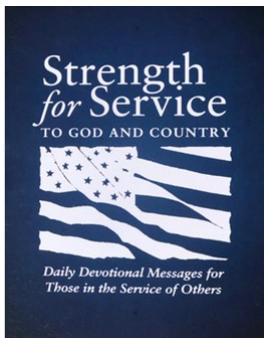
As more people are vaccinated for Covid-19 and winter has passed, Table of Grace has changed our home delivery service. Starting in June, we began delivering to church members who are homebound and cannot come to the church. This "status" may be permanent for some of our loved ones. But it might also be temporary due to some special situation. As of July 1, we currently have three drivers delivering food every Sunday to 14 church members. Shown in the picture is driver Jim Morrissey delivering dinner to Edy Edwards, resident of Levi Towers. After receiving her hot dinner, Edy texted the following message:

"Thanks for the dinner. It was delicious...a lot better than the peanut butter and jelly sandwich I would have made for myself. And it was really nice to know the church still remembered me."



Outreach is collecting tuna or Treet during the month of July.

Devotional Resources for Those Serving Us



In the years since September 11, 2001, a new generation of American military personnel has been deployed to war zones around the world. In a time of war, those called into the service of others often turn to spiritual resources for perspective and the strength to persevere. As individuals standing in harms way by the circumstances of war consider their eternal destiny, published materials that answer lifes tough questions are urgently needed and remain in especially high demand. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, the General Commission on United Methodist Men (GCUMM) has been actively raising awareness and financial support to supply an updated copy of the book first published in 1942 to every man and woman serving the U.S. armed forces worldwide. .

Strength for Service to God and Community is a book of daily devotions for police officers, firefighters, healthcare workers and other first responders. This new book is patterned after **Strength for Service to God and Country**. This companion volume is written for men and women who rush into situations where others are running in the opposite direction. These first responders may not receive combat pay, but they risk their lives for us, and they know firsthand about major injuries and death. This book addresses their daily situations by providing appropriate devotional thoughts and prayers.

GAUMC supports the development, printing, and distribution of these two books with a \$100 donation annually from our Reaching Out in Love church budget. Every July we also ask our members to also individually support the forces choose to work in fields that protect and heal us by donating to these publications. A basket in the sanctuary is available for your donations.

Helping Senior Citizens in Need

It seems clear to most of us that God has called GAUMC to help feed hungry people in our community. The United Methodist Outreach Store has for many years been providing a week's supply of groceries to individuals and families referred by DHS. Backpacks for Kids provides weekend meals for students in Hot Springs District as determined by school counselors. Table of Grace serves a hot meal every Sunday night to anyone who comes to our church for that reason. Snack Packs are put together to give to individuals who come to us hungry and need something immediately. As these various projects developed and were implemented, our Mission Team constantly asked "who are we missing?" And God always pointed us in the right direction. One "nudge" we got was for Senior Citizens with incomes inadequate to meet their needs. Often these elderly folks run out of money before the end of the month. When that happens, they have to choose between medications prescribed by a doctor, food to eat, or bills to pay.

GAUMC has developed a partnership with the Area Agency on Aging to help meet these and other emergency needs in the lives of elderly folks in Hot Springs. When food for the AAA pantry is needed, Doug Baber and Larry Hatfield come to the rescue! An order sheet from Project Hope Food Bank is provided to Karen Sawyer, Director of Case Management for AAA. Karen completes the order form and returns it to the church. Larry and/or Doug take the form to Project Hope where the desired items are loaded into their truck and returned to the Project Hope pantry (built by volunteer carpenters from GAUMC!) The case management workers and the nurse employed by AAA then deliver the food to their clients as need is determined in client/staff interactions. This outreach mission project is funded by donations from church members. You may contribute through cash or checks that identify Area on Aging Project as the recipient. Or you may pledge a regularly scheduled donation of the amount you choose on the church website. See Chris Headley (501-623-5626) for assistance with signing-up for that action.





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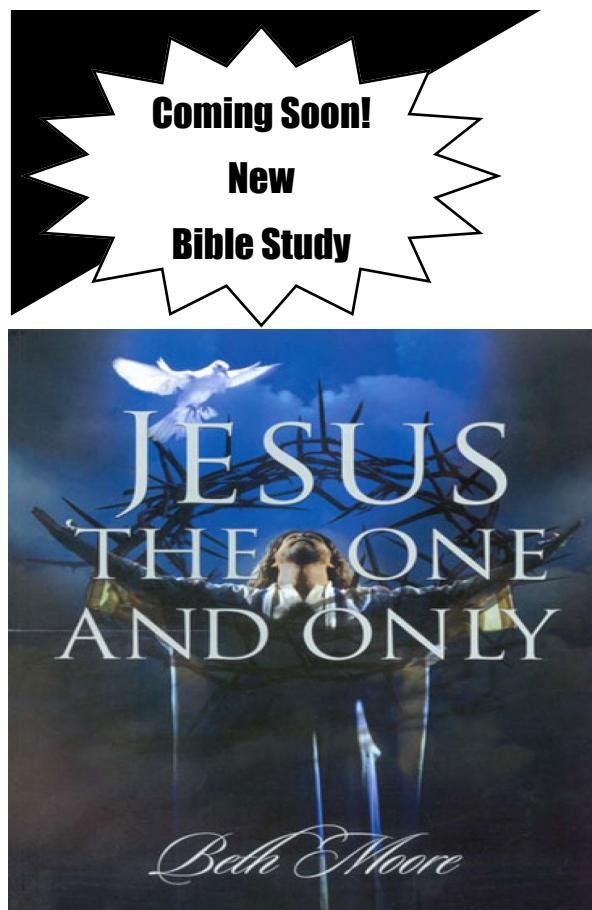
We're Here to Serve You

Senior Pastor - Rev. David M. Fleming
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J E S U S

The One and Only

Join us for our new ten-week
Beth Moore Bible Study!

Beginning August 19, 2021

9:00 am to 11:00 am

Grand Avenue UMC Fellowship Hall

To register for the class or
for more information, contact:

Lee Calloway
(501) 282-4010
lcallo6@gmail.com