



THE GOOD NEWS

LENT 2026

*Repair is
Radical*



THE WORK OF MENDING WHAT IS BROKEN

CONTACT US

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FROM PASTOR LAURA

Beloved,

Lately, I have taken an interest in the “art” of mending. In a throw-away society, to salvage something through repair feels radical, counter-intuitive, maybe even a little subversive. My best example is the well-worn jean jacket I purchased 22 years ago. The fabric around the collar is falling apart, but I keep finding ways to reinforce it and re-stitch it. It’s currently repaired with a cross between darning and embroidery. And I dare you to find the spot I have mended.



Bottom line: Levis simply doesn’t make a jean jacket quite like that one anymore. It is vintage. It is comfy. It is mine. It is loved.

I’ll let you in on a little secret – since my divorce in 2007, my kids and I have been avid “thrifters.” We learned to stretch our clothing dollars at some of the amazing thrift stores in our area. There were a couple of years where I just kept adding wide brightly colored ribbons to the bottom of the girls jeans as the legs became too short, convincing them that unique embellishments like that were cool.

Most often, my takes the form of minor repairs to clothing – a self-adhesive nylon patch on a down jacket, some tone-on-tone embroidered flowers that cover up the awkward mending of small holes in wool tops, darning moth holes in a beloved cashmere sweater. But I also repurpose food leftovers like a champ. Those black beans go in chili two days later. Rice becomes a crispy omelet. Leftover brisket becomes hash. Leftover communion bread becomes bread pudding. It’s a little like a game. And the results are often more magical than the original!

Matt, my husband, takes great joy in gluing things back together, saving broken parts and pieces to be used to repair the next generation gizmo, patching up fence in the garden so that the rabbits stay away from the tomatoes. His current favorite repair involves some creative woodwork to salvage an antique rocker that he bought at auction for \$3.

Mending honors the life of an object.

Mending makes it possible for broken things to continue to serve a purpose.

Mending reveals a deeper story about what has been and what might be.



I think God is in the business of mending. As Methodists, we believe that we are “going on to perfection,” forward momentum that is marked by repair, renewal, redirection. Grace is not a magic thing that renders us perfect and pristine – in fact we often bear the scars and marks of our life mis-steps until we leave this earthly life, even as we keep moving forward changed by what has happened to us. In the midst of such things, I deeply believe that God is at work improving us, improving the world, moving us (slowly at times) toward justice, compassion, piety and mercy.

(And to be really clear, this isn't just a Methodist thing – our Jewish siblings embrace the concept of *Tikkun Olam* – repairing the world. Jewish communities focus on acts of justice, service and compassion, embracing the collective responsibility for the repair of the world.)



Throughout Lent this year, we will be exploring the idea of mending alongside the stories of the last days of Jesus' life. We'll consider repair and how God is working in and through us and the world. We'll engage in practices of repair (think of a BIG church work day) together, seeking to make something whole again and to work alongside others doing the same.

As we step into this season together, may we discover that every act of repair—no matter how small—draws us closer to the wholeness God imagines. And perhaps, in the mending, we will find ourselves made new as well.

Pastor Laura

A Slow Walk Through Holy Week

A Season of Mending

Lent invites us to slow down—not because life is calm, but because it is not.

This year, we will walk slowly through the Gospel of John, tracing the final days of Jesus' life from the raising of Lazarus to the empty tomb.

Rather than rushing to Easter, we will linger with the stories that show us our humanity clearly: grief, fear, denial, truth-telling, injustice, love poured out, and hope restored.

Each week we will ask:

What in us needs mending?

And where is God already at work, stitching grace into what feels torn?

Mending is not quick work.
It requires honesty.
It leaves visible proof of repair.
And it is holy work.

The God who raised Jesus from the dead is still mending lives, communities, and the world. This season, we will learn to notice—and join—that work.

S E R I E S S C H E D U L E

Ash Wednesday – February 18 at 7:30 p.m.

John 10:1-18

Beginning the Work of Mending – Returning to the Shepherd

Lent 1 – February 22 at 10:00 a.m.

John 11:1-44

Mending Our Relationship with Grief

Lent 2 – March 1 at 10:00 a.m.

John 13:1-17

Mending Our Need for Control

Lent 3 – March 8 at 10:00 a.m.

John 18:12-27

Mending Our Fear and Denial

Lent 4 – March 15 at 10:00 a.m.

John 18:28-40

Mending Our Relationship with Truth

Lent 5 – March 22 at 10:00 a.m.

John 19:1-16a

Mending Human Dignity

Palm/Passion Sunday – March 29 at 10:00 a.m.

John 19:16b-22

Mending Faith Under Empire

Maundy Thursday – April 2 at 7:30 p.m.

John 19:23-30

Mending Through Love Poured Out

Good Friday – April 3 at 7:30 p.m.

John 19:31-42

Mending in the Presence of Death

Easter (Communion) – April 5 at 10:00 a.m.

John 20:1-18

Mending Hope

Easter 2 – April 12 at 10:00 a.m.

John 20:19-31

Mending Belief and Doubt



~ **An Invitation** ~

Come walk with us.

Come honestly.

Come as you are.

*There is room in this story for your questions,
your wounds, and your hope.*

And there is grace for the mending.

Blowout Pancake Supper

On February 17, Faith Church is celebrating Shrove Tuesday with a pancake supper from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Shrove Tuesday is your last chance for a blowout meal —gluten-free available—before Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent.

The day is also known as Mardi Gras, so be ready to eat king cake and find the baby, listen to New Orleans jazz, make your own mask, and just generally be in a celebratory mood. By the way, shrove refers to hearing a confession and giving absolution—but we'll never tell. If you are interested in helping after 3 p.m. on Tuesday, February 17 to prepare for Shrove Tuesday, please email Pam Kessler at kesslerpamela@gmail.com.

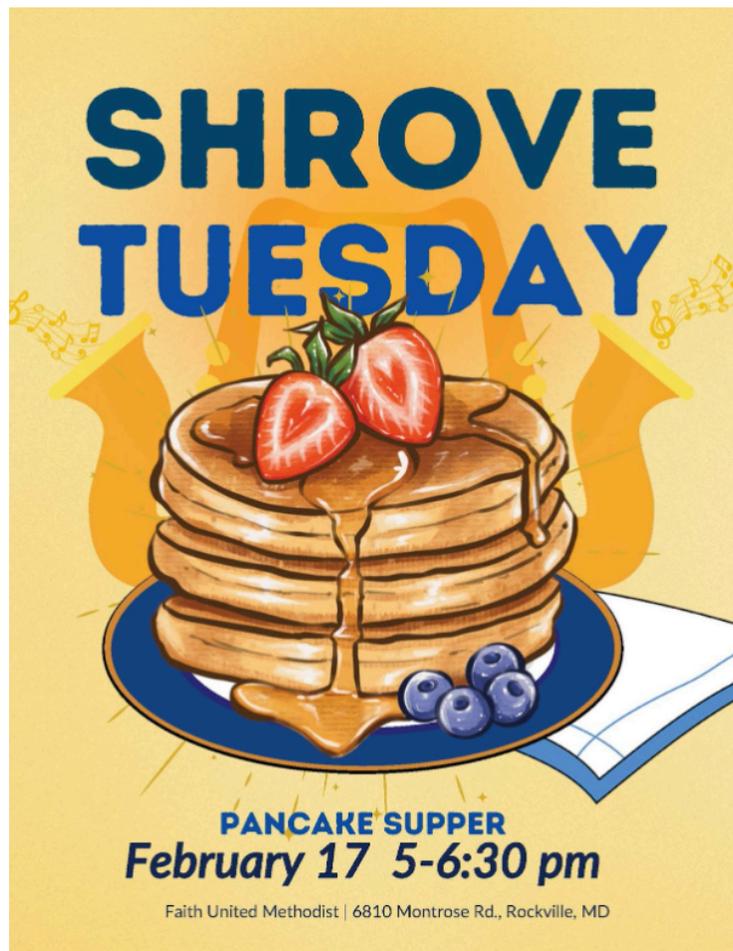
Lenten Breakfast Study

Saturday series

In an effort to strengthen relationships within our Hub, Rockville UMC has invited us to join their Lenten study practice—a Saturday morning breakfast gathering that includes scripture, reflections, and guided discussion. Because we'll be sharing a meal each week, a meal-centered theme from the life and ministry of Jesus offers a meaningful lens for our conversations. The five part series will meet each Saturday beginning February 21 from 8:30-10:30 a.m. at Rockville UMC at 112 W. Montgomery Ave., Rockville. Everyone is invited!

NEW MEMBER CLASS

Faith 101, a get-to-know-you-and-the-church class, will begin on February 22, meeting after worship. If you are new to Faith or have never had the opportunity to participate in a new member class, consider joining the conversation. Members Jane Rall, Hunter Prillaman and Rev. John Campbell will be leading the group. If you are interested, please email Pastor Laura at RevLaura@faithworkshere.com.



MUSIC MINISTRIES

Diversity in Music at Faith

As we experience February and look forward to March and April, we continue to connect the music in worship with the cultural heritage months celebrated in America. In February, we continue to be mindful of Black History Month by ensuring that all the Chancel Choir anthems, and some of the hymns and music we experience, come from African American sources. The snow and ice made us pivot from the arrangement of Give Me, Jesus, that Chancel Choir presented February 1; we continue the month with music arranged by William Dawson, Raymond Wise, and André Thomas. March brings us Women's History Month, and music the Chancel Choir aims to present will represent composers Elaine Hagenberg, Rosephanye Powell, Amy Beach, Marianne Forman, and Stephanie Martin.



In January, I had an opportunity to present at a national conference of children's and youth choir directors in the American Choral Directors Association. My topic was, "Intergenerational and Multicultural Collaborations in the Choral Setting." While I had the requisite outline, sources, and sound clips and images from programs I have done with Strathmore Youth Chorus, I made the hour a sharing that invited participants to add their experiences along these lines. I talked about my why in terms of relevance to the organization, building community, and growth individually and collectively for all involved. The proverbial rubber meets the road in implementing such collaborations, and I focused on personal and musical study, dialogue with culture bearers, planning and logistics, What I found was summarized best by Michelle Obama, being interviewed on MSNow about her recent book, *The Look*.

Michelle spoke about becoming "the closer" in her husband's campaign for President, saying, "You'd start the conversation with people like this (arms crossed in front of chest), and then, as the story began, people would nod, and they could see themselves in that story. And that is the America, I want us to remember, because that is the truth about how people are. I always say, it's harder to hate up close because it's easy to demonize people you don't know."

At a most recent Black History Month Assembly at Landon, Montgomery County Circuit Court Judge and Landon parent Karla Cohen told our community about how difficult it was to be a woman prosecutor in the early 1990s, and to then become the first African American woman judge in this county. But she felt it critical to persevere and do the work: "Our county is dramatically more diverse than it was a few decades ago, and it is crucial that citizens in court see a judicial system with people that look like them to help reassure them that they will receive a fair and impartial trial."

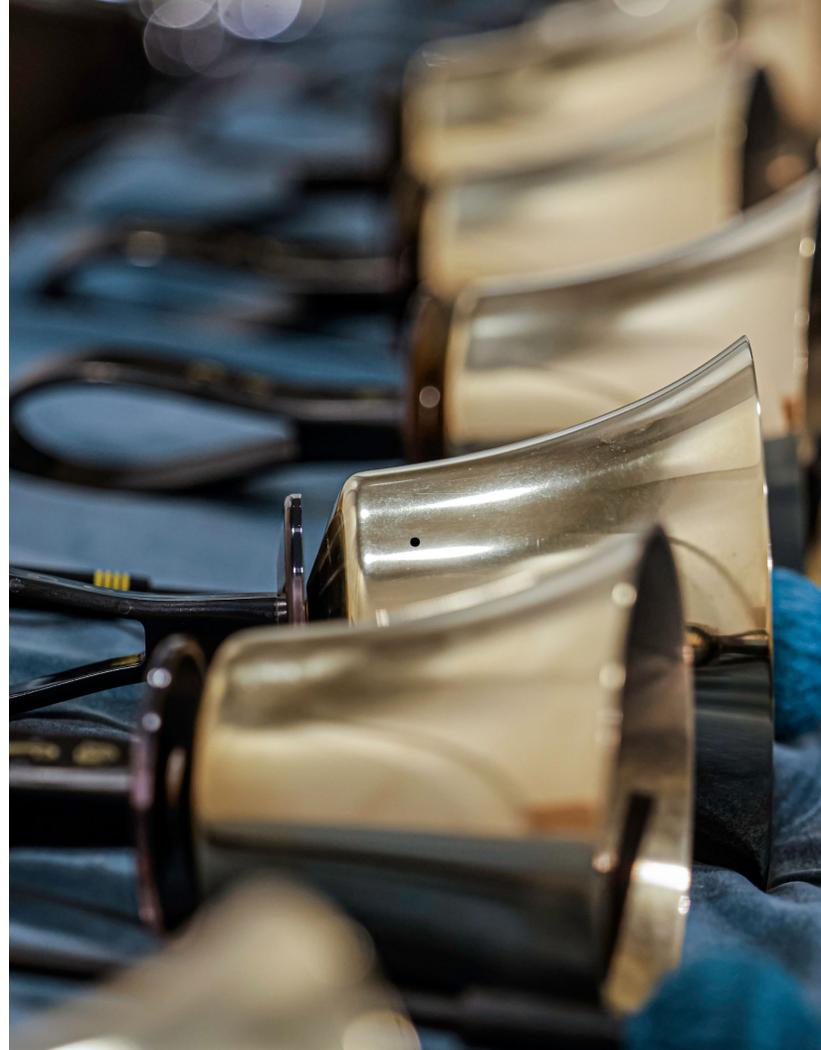
So, when we continue to commit to a Faith UMC that is open and welcoming to all people, and for all to mean all, we must include music in that welcome. I am fortunate to have lived a life where those connections across myriad cultures in musical contexts are part of my everyday work, and I am blessed to be able to bring that to our church.

Michael Wu

Director of Music

A CHORUS OF GRATITUDE: OUR HANDBELLS ARE ON THEIR WAY TO RESTORATION

As previously shared because of your generosity, Bells of Faith successfully reached their fundraising goal needed for the Faith handbells and cases to be refurbished...and so earlier in January, three octaves of bells were sent to Schulmerich for their full refurbishment. We were also blessed to receive a 5% cost reduction by scheduling our service during their off-peak period. The bells are expected to be returned in approximately two months, and during this time the Bells of Faith will continue to share music in worship using chimes Sunday, February 15th and most likely also in March.



We are deeply grateful for the outpouring of support that made this possible. Your gifts ensure that our music ministry can continue to offer beautiful, meaningful worship through handbells for years to come. And we can't help but notice that the timing of the handbells' repair dovetails nicely with our Lenten theme of mending. As Pastor Laura shared, *mending honors the life of an object. Mending makes it possible for broken things to continue to serve a purpose. Mending reveals a deeper story about what has been and what might be.*

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Youth Leadership in Action: Blessing Box Expansion and ASP Mission Trip

Our youth have several meaningful projects underway this spring, even as we navigate the bitter cold. One of their primary efforts has been supporting our Blessing Box ministry, which continues to play a vital role in serving our community during challenging times. Each week, our youth collect donations from the congregation, remove expired items, and restock the box with fresh supplies.

In recent months, they have noticed that the box no longer provides adequate space—particularly as the need to separate food and non-food items has become more apparent. At the same time, our partners at North Bethesda UMC have seen a growing demand for the very resources the Blessing Box provides. To meet the needs of both congregations, youth parents and structural engineers Alisa and Joseph Dowd collaborated with our team to design an improved Blessing Box model that will better serve both communities.

This spring, the youth will build two new boxes—one for each congregation—and install them at both locations. Looking ahead, we hope to pursue community grants that would allow us to incorporate a small refrigerator for perishable goods, expanding the ministry's reach even further.

All of this hands-on experience will serve our youth well as we prepare for another summer with Appalachia Service Project. From July 12–18, 2026, we will send a team of youth and adults to help make homes warmer, safer, and drier for families in need. While we do not yet know our assigned location, we are excited for the opportunity to serve. This year, we have invited the other churches in our hub to join us for a shared mission experience.

We would love for you to be part of the team! Youth who have completed 6th grade and adults of all skill levels are welcome. There is a place for everyone, and we will support you every step of the way. For more information, please contact Suzanne Smedberg, Youth Coordinator, at ssmedberg@faithworkshere.com.



SPRING CONFIRMATION CLASS

Faith is offering a Saturday-morning "intensive" Confirmation class this spring for youth in grades 7-10. Our plan is to meet at the church for FOUR Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. for a highly interactive and fast-paced learning experience.

Sessions will be held on the following Saturdays:

- March 7
- March 21
- May 16
- May 23

Participation in all sessions is expected. Students will be confirmed during worship on Sunday, June 7.

If you would like your child to take part in this class, please notify Valerie Kunsman by Wednesday, February 18.

Thank you for your support and engagement. We look forward to a meaningful and enriching Confirmation experience this spring.

HAVE YOU HERD THE GOOD NEWS? PALABRAS WITH THE CABRAS

Give Ye Them to Eat (GYTTE) with Pastor Pat and Kim Lewis are honored to serve as two of three Global Missionaries in Mexico-and with 190 missionaries worldwide. They are grateful to be the fourth missionary couple to serve with GYTTE. Before this season of service, they spent many years in ministry: Pat as an elder and Kim in nonprofit leadership serving vulnerable populations. Their journey has carried them through multiple seasons of learning, transformation, and yes-plenty of moving - all grounded in God's call to love and serve. GYTTE is excited to announce their first goat sponsor of 2026-and it's helping grow the herd in a big way! Read more about their work and transformation in their [newsletter](#).



Jesus' call to "give them something to eat," meeting physical needs while pointing hearts to Christ. I do not take this covenant lightly. I am grateful for your trust, your covering, and your willingness to invest in God's work beyond your own walls.

Let's find a time to connect and map out a plan of action of information we can share with your congregation and how we might be able to inspire a mission team from Valparaiso First to experience Give Ye Them To Eat in action. We always appreciate prayers and look forward to staying in touch.

It is an honor to be partnered with you for the glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom.

With heartfelt gratitude and love in Christ,

Kim

Kim Lewis (she/her)

Global Missionary, *Give Ye Them To Eat*

klewis@umcmmission.org

Missionary Advance #: 3022838

Give Ye Them to Eat Advance #: 07629A



Missionary and the work of Give Ye Them To Eat. Your commitment is far more than financial support—it is a spiritual partnership rooted in faith and love for God's people. You are helping me live out

IF GOD CALLED YOU, WOULD YOU LISTEN?

Thirty people gathered for the Faith Vision Retreat on Saturday, January 24, to think deeply about the passions God has placed in our hearts and how our God-given talents can make a difference in our community. We started with a reminder that call is different from volunteering. God-given calls are those things in life that tug at our hearts, stick in our minds, and compel us to find a way to act. We talked about how God often equips us as we step into our callings- an encouragement and reminder that we can say yes to a call even if we don't feel like we have all the answers at the start.



We then heard about 5 ministry areas and some of the things currently happening, things that used to happen, and things that could happen again.

1. Children's ministry
2. Adult ministry
3. Missional use of our property
4. Engaging our neighbors in the community
5. Our new church hub connections.

It was a time of high energy and excitement around all the things that we are currently doing and are proud of and encouraging hope to see momentum grow. The kids in attendance also drew a picture of their ideal church and they blew us away with their ability to envision purpose for every room - inside and outside on our property - to enrich the lives of the congregation and the community.

During fellowship hour the next few weeks, look for our brainstorming notes. Ask one another what's one thing you're proud to see at Faith UMC and ask yourself what you currently do to ensure those ministries you love continue to thrive. Together we are the hands and feet of God, and it was good to make space to remember that God calls us to be light and love in the world.

Janelle Veazey

Leadership Board member

FAITH BY THE FIRE: SPRING 2026 FUMC CAMPOUT

May 2-3

Members and families of the Faith United Methodist Church (FUMC) community are invited to the Spring 2026 FUMC Campout at Little Bennett Campground in Clarksburg, MD the weekend of May 2-3. We will enjoy hiking, games, food, fellowship around the fire, and sleeping under the trees in the great Maryland outdoors! We will also have an informal worship service on Sunday morning. More details to follow. Those unable or not wishing to camp overnight are also welcome!



- Dates: Saturday–Sunday, May 2–3, 2006; arrive Saturday afternoon and leave anytime Sunday.

Campers and non-campers: please register your attendance using the QR code. A \$40 deposit is required to reserve a campsite. Campsites will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. (Campers only: There is a separate tab in the registration link to submit your deposit.)



For questions, please contact Chuck Spencer at vcspencer@aol.com or 240-370-2799.

We hope you'll join us for a great weekend of fellowship and outdoor fun!

HONORING OUR MESSY CHURCH TEAM

Messy Church continued to be a joy-filled ministry in our congregation in 2025, offering the community a space to learn, create, and grow in faith together. As an intergenerational form of church that offers an alternative to traditional Sunday services, this ministry relied on the dedication and creativity of its volunteers led by the Messy Church team of Curtis Osborne, Susan Jones and Karen Simpson.

A heartfelt thank-you to this team for their faithful leadership and hands-on support. Whether preparing dinner, guiding activities, welcoming families, or helping bring each theme to life, their commitment ensured that Messy Church was a place of hospitality, imagination, and spiritual connection.

We are appreciative of the time, energy, and love the team and the numerous volunteers poured into this ministry. Their service created meaningful worship for our community members. As we move forward, we remain in a season of discernment about the future shape of Messy Church, listening for where God may be leading and how this ministry might continue to grow. We are grateful for all who have supported it thus far and look with hope toward what may emerge.





THE GOOD NEWS

Important Dates (see also the Lenten Series dates on page 4):

- **Tuesday, February 17:** Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner
- **Saturday, February 21:** Lenten Breakfast series with Rockville UMC
- **Sunday, February 22:** United Women in Faith
- **Sunday, February 22:** New Member class begins
- **Sunday, March 7:** Confirmation class begins
- **Saturday, March 14:** Faith UMC Work Day
- **Sunday, April 26:** Disability Awareness Month
- **Saturday, May 2-3:** Faith by the Fire campout
- **Sunday, May 17:** Graduate recognition
- **Sunday, June 7:** Reception of confirmands

More information about these happenings will be provided in Friday's weekly What's Working at Faith. If you have any questions, please contact the office at office@FaithWorksHere.com.

FAITH UMC STAFF

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell, Pastor
Ann Bartlow, Organist
André Coleman, Tenor Section Leader
Keshika Diaz, Facilities Manager
Valerie Kunsman, Office Administrator
Tessa Ricketts, Nursery Staff
Suzanne Smedberg, Youth Coordinator
Kim Webster, Finance Manager
Dr. Michael Wu, Music Director

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