



FEBRUARY 2024

THE MESSENGER

Making the Love of God Obvious!

NATIONAL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

UMW Book Sale

Holy Week Schedule

Lenten Study

Shrove Tuesday 2024

Coming in March:

- Nurturing One Another
- Sing Out for Shelter Concert
- Easter Egg Hunt
- New Trees at NUMC
- Share the Joy of Easter



Reconciling Statement

We celebrate God's gift of diversity and value the wholeness made possible in community equally shared and shepherded by all.

We welcome and affirm people of every gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, who are also of every age, race, ethnicity, physical and mental ability, level of education, and family structure, and of every economic, immigration, marital, and social status, and so much more.

We acknowledge that we live in a world of profound social, economic, and political inequities.

As followers of Jesus, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of justice and pledge to stand in solidarity with all who are marginalized and oppressed.

Sunday Worship in Lent

Overview by
Rev. Doug Robinson-Johnson

Friends of a blind man bring him to Jesus for healing. Jesus takes the man by the hand, leads him out of town and applies a salve on his eyes, and then asks, "Do you see anything?" The man admits images are fuzzy. "Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly." - Mark 8:22-26



The season of Lent offers clarity of sight. In stages. Notice in Mark's story that the man's vision is not immediately restored. Vision came in stages—a hand is taken, a journey is made, medicine is tried, then Jesus places his hands over the man's eyes after the first attempt fails. Notice too that the text doesn't tell us Jesus moved his hand and then the man could see. Maybe that's what happened and it was a miracle. But what also may have happened is that the man could "see" even with Jesus holding his eyes closed. This fits the overall theme of Mark's gospel, that discipleship of Jesus teaches us to trust what we cannot yet see.

These days most of us can see what is happening around us. We see violence in our streets and desolation in the streets of Ukraine and Gaza. We see massive reminders of climate change such as endless torrents of rain and wind. Each Sunday in Lent we take the hand of Christ and let him apply his medicine—a healing balm—on our eyes. Each Sunday we receive another dose of wisdom from the Bible and from our study guide for Lent *A Sacred Voice is Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience* by John Neafsey. We see ourselves and our world a bit more clearly each time we do. But the miracle comes when we finally sense Christ's hands on our eyes and we finally awaken to the inhumanity of so many sinful systems here and now. Then sight is restored. Then lasting change is possible!

*2/25 Lent 2
Preparing for New Life
Mark 8:31-38
MM: Ann Michel
Wes: Pastor Doug*

*3/3 Lent 3, Communion Sunday
Quest for a Worthy Dream
John 2:13-22
MM: Pastor Rachel
Wes: Rev. Janet*

*3/10 Lent 4
Wounded Healers
2 Corinthians 5:11-17
MM: Derek Willis
Wes: Pastor Doug*

*3/17 Lent 5
Morality of the Heart
Jeremiah 31:31-24
MM: Rev. Janet
Wes: Pastor Rachel*

*3/24 Palm Sunday
Awakening from the Sleep of Inhumanity
Mark 15:1-39, 40-47
MM 9am: Angela Pupino
MM 11am: Rev. Janet
Wes 11am Pastors Rachel and Doug*

UMW Book Sale!

by Anita Seline



Make sure to visit the Metropolitan Memorial Vestry this weekend for the annual UMW Book & Bake Sale, February 23, 24, and 25. What a great way to support organizations working to help women, young people, children, and immigrants.

The Book & Bake Sale runs Friday Feb. 23 and Saturday Feb. 24 from 8 am to 8pm. Sunday Feb. 25, the clearance sale, will be 8 am to 12 noon. The sale features a well-organized and well-priced variety of books, vinyl records, CDs, DVDs, and puzzles. Again we will feature an outstanding Bake Sale which will include lots of goodies and a wide array of soups from veggie to chicken.

This year's sale will support Project Transformation DC, a summer camp that helps kids retain and improve their reading skills; AsylumWorks, an organization that provides employment and legal support to immigrants in the DC area, FAIR Girls, providing intervention and holistic care to female survivors of human trafficking and Wesley Seminary. We accept credit cards, Venmo, Apple Pay, cash, and checks.



See you at the Book & Bake Sale!

Holy Week in the Gospels

Join Rev. Janet and the Thursday Morning Bible study for a three-week examination of the last week of Jesus' human life as told in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Everyone is welcome - no preparation or previous Bible-study experience required! The class is hybrid, so you may participate via Zoom or in-person.

March 7: The last supper and last words

March 14: Trial and denial

March 21: The crucifixion

Thursdays, 10:30-noon, in the conference room at Metropolitan Memorial or on Zoom
Meeting ID 452 637 297
passcode 025452.

YOU need this: Volunteer for Vacation Bible School June 24-28; 8:30 am - noon

by Courtney Leatherman

This is my favorite church event of the year! If you need a spiritual lift or you're simply overflowing with love to share this is for you!

A week spent with kids and our broader community = Joy!

Please join us. Help for an hour, a day, or a week! Before, during, and after.

We need folks who can help with arts & crafts, snack preparations, science "experiments" and shepherding our kids from one activity to the next.

(note: campers arrive just before camp starts at 9.)

Please email Courtney Leatherman ASAP:
leatherman.courtney@gmail.com

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday, March 24
Metropolitan Memorial 9 am and 11 am
Palms and Children's Choir and Wesley
9 am Breakfast,
11 am Palms, String Quartet
"Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Prayer and Praise
Wednesday-Online
6:00-7:00 pm

Holy Thursday, March 28
6:30 - 7:30 pm
Wesley Fellowship Hall
A simple meal followed by table conversations, songs, and communion.
"Anguish of the grave came over me;
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.
Then I called on the name of the Lord:
"Lord, save me!"

Good Friday, March 29
7:00-8:00 pm
Metropolitan Memorial Sanctuary
A service based on seven stations of the cross (live-streamed)
"Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"

Easter Sunday, March 31
Metropolitan Memorial 9 am and 11 am
Featuring:
• Commonwealth Brass
• Metropolitan Ringers
• Organ, and Choir at both services
• Community Egg Hunt

Wesley 11 am
• Featuring Wesley Choir
• Praise Band

"Christ the Lord is Risen Today!"

Lenten Study: A Sacred Voice is Calling

by Rev. Janet Craswell

How do we distinguish between an authentic calling and the competing, counterfeit voices in our culture? How can we balance the inward listening to our hearts and listening with our hearts to the needs of our world?

This Lent, we will consider the ways God calls us, what God calls us to do, and who God calls us to be. Calling is not just about a job or a mission, it is also about discovering our true selves. Using John Neafsey's book, *A Sacred Voice is Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience* as a starting point, we will look at how God is calling every one of us – each unique, authentic self. The weekly meetings will be a time of prayer, meditation, gentle discussion, and listening for God's voice among us.

There are two discussion opportunities: on-line on Thursdays, and in-person on Sundays.

Thursdays, 7-8 pm, on Zoom.

Meeting ID: 840 6006 3996

Passcode: 086393

Sundays, 10-11 am, in the Library at the Metropolitan Memorial Campus
Facilitated by Ginger and Haisten Willis



Feb. 29/March 3 - Vision: The Quest for a Worthy Dream
March 7/March 10 - Suffering: The Call of the Wounded Healer
March 14/17 - Conscience: The Morality of the Heart
March 21/24 - Social Conscience: Awakening from the Sleep of Inhumanity

You are not required to read the book to participate, but you may find it meaningful. Copies of the book are available in the office at the Metropolitan Memorial campus and on the back table at the Wesley campus. If you need a copy of the book mailed to you, please send a note to communications@nationalchurch.org.

Shrove Tuesday 2024

by Angela Pupino

The NUMC community gathered in the Metropolitan Memorial Campus Vestry on February 13 for food, fellowship, and crafts at the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. We had at least 70 pancake-eaters and twenty volunteers, including youth, AU students, and several families from Boy Scout Troop 666.

Special thanks to Peter Mucha for staying through the last of the dishwashing, and to Operations and the Building and Grounds crew (Lucinda, Rafael, Rafael, Angel, and Juan) for helping with set-up, clean-up, and everything in between. Extra special thanks to Mike Greene, kitchen manager extraordinaire, who not only kept everything running like clockwork but also made all our gluten-filled pancake batter from scratch. At least one attendee said they tasted "like his grandmother's pancakes."

What a way to prepare for Lent!



Coming in March...

Nurturing One Another: A time of reflection, fellowship and conversation, March 3

by Caralee Adams

Join us on Sunday, March 3, from 3-5 pm, in the Great Hall of the Metropolitan Memorial campus to discuss ways we can meet the needs of our congregation and broader community as we form a new Nurture Team.

This will be an invitation to share joys, concerns, and ideas about innovative ways to strengthen our connections and deepen our faith. We'll talk about ways to enhance our traditional community events, as well as brainstorm on new activities to care for and energize our church family. Come with suggestions or just to listen.

The event is open to all.

32nd Annual Sing Out for Shelter Concert Saturday, March 9, 7:30 pm, at NUMC, Metropolitan Memorial Sanctuary

by Ann Michel

Once again, National UMC has the honor of hosting the Annual Sing Out for Shelter benefit concert. Over the years this event has raised more than \$400,000 to support Friendship Place, Christ House, and the work of our St. Luke's Mission Center.

The year's concert will feature a cappella performances by The Augmented Eight, Yale University's Whim'n Rhythm, and the Maret School's Gracenotes. Tickets can be purchased [online](#) or at the door. General admission is \$30.



Youth Confirmation Classes Begin March 3

Confirmation Classes will begin at 9 am on March 3 for youth in grades 6 and above. Parents whose youth are interested in participating should contact Student Ministries Coordinator Angela Pupino at apupino@nationalchurch.org by February 29, 2024.

The Confirmation Class schedule can be found at nationalchurch.org/youth



College Student Civil Rights Immersion Trip

Rev. Dr. Rachel Livingston and Angela Pupino will be leading college students from American University and Frostburg State University on a Civil Rights Immersion Trip from March 9 - 16, 2024. Pastor Rachel organized the trip to give students the opportunity to learn about the Civil Rights Movement while visiting Birmingham, Selma, and Montgomery, Alabama.

Jazz@Wesley Presents Muneer Nasser Quintet Saturday, March 23 6:30-8:30 pm (2 sets)

Muneer Nasser Quintet's distinct brand of jazz is part Memphis blues, part New York fire, and a healthy dose of DC flavor. The Quintet's all-star line-up includes trumpeter Muneer Nasser, saxophonist Elijah Easton, pianist Allyn Johnson, bassist James King, Jr., and drummer Julian Berkowitz. Born in 1967 to the late, great bassist Jamil Nasser, Muneer's exposure to jazz was early and powerful. Come hear an exciting distillation of his history and experience. www.nationalchurch.org/jazz

Community Easter Egg hunt March 31

Invite your friends and neighbors to join us for a community Easter Egg hunt on Sunday, March 31 at 10:15 am on the plaza in front of Metropolitan Memorial Campus of National UMC. We'll hide eggs and have fun activities for kids of all ages. If you'd like to volunteer, contact communications@nationalchurch.org



A/V Volunteers Needed

Help is needed to show the lyrics for the 9 am Metropolitan Memorial service. No experience or knowledge is required. Anyone from 12 and up is welcome. Please contact Greg Denton at gdenton@nationalchurch.org or come to the Metropolitan Memorial sanctuary at 8 am.

Tuesday, March 26th, 7 pm Book Launch at Politics and Prose, Connecticut Ave. Get Off of My Neck: Black Lives, White Justice, and a Former Prosecutor's Quest for Reform

By National UMC Member **Debbie Hines**

[Pre-Order Here](#)

Overview by Politics and Prose:

In *Get Off My Neck*, Debbie Hines draws on her unique perspective as a trial lawyer, former Baltimore prosecutor, and assistant attorney general for the State of Maryland to argue that US prosecutors, as the most powerful players in the criminal justice system, systematically target and criminalize Black people. Hines describes her disillusionment as a young Black woman who initially entered the profession with the goal of helping victims of crimes, only to discover herself aiding and abetting a system that prizes plea bargaining, speedy conviction, and excessive punishment above all else. In this book, she offers concrete, specific, and hopeful solutions for just how we can come together in a common purpose for criminal justice and racial justice reform.

Get Off My Neck explains that the racial inequities in the prosecutorial system are built into our country's DNA. What's more, they are the direct result of a history that has conditioned Americans to perceive the Black body as insignificant at best and dangerous at worst. Unlike other books that discuss the prosecutor's office and change from inside the office, Hines offers a proactive approach to fixing our broken prosecutorial system through a broad-based alliance of reform-minded prosecutors, activists, allies, communities, and racial justice organizations--all working together to end the racist treatment of Black people.

Told intimately through personal, family, and client narratives, *Get Off My Neck* is not only a deeply sobering account of our criminal justice system and its devastating impact on Black children, youth, and adults but also a practical and inspiring roadmap for how we can start doing better right now.



Debbie unboxes first copies of her new book "Get Off My Neck."



[View Video of Debbie Hines's 2023 Sermon at National UMC HERE.](#)

Youth Summer Service Week: July 8-11, 2024



The Youth Summer Service Week [registration page](#) is live. This year's Youth Service Week will happen July 8 - 11, 2024, and will focus on connecting more deeply with the DC community and history. Youth in grades 6 and above are welcome and feel free to invite family and friends. The cost for the week is \$100 per youth, but is capped at \$200 for families with more than two youth. Scholarships are available!

If you have any questions or would like to know about scholarships, please contact Student Ministries Coordinator Angela Pupino at apupino@nationalchurch.org

Easter Flowers

*CELEBRATING THE RESURRECTION AND HONORING
OUR LOVED ONES*

Remember or honor your family and friends while beautifying our church with a donation toward the Easter flowers that festoon our two beautiful sanctuaries on Easter Sunday.



The Easter flowers in the church are 100% provided by your contributions. Each flower is available for a donation of \$25. Any donation amount is welcome. All donations will be recognized in our Easter morning bulletin.

To remember or honor a loved one this Easter, please fill out the form online. You can [make your donation online](#) or send cash or a check to: Pam Murdoch, Finance Coordinator c/o National UMC, Metropolitan Memorial Campus, 3401 Nebraska Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20016.

www.nationalchurch.org/flowers

New Trees on All Three Campuses of National UMC!



Pastor Doug received an odd call from a representative of "Laudato" seeking permission to plant trees, free of charge, on church property as an act of faith and partnership with God. How could he resist? The Board of Trustees learned that the Roman Catholic organization sought to honor a global request by Pope Francis to confront climate change by partnering with local non-profits to get the work done. Not only would the trees be planted by teams of passionate volunteers, but they would also be maintained by these non-profits for three years to ensure flourishing growth for many years to come. "Of course," the Trustees agreed! NUMC volunteers Courtney Leatherman, Richard Tilley, and Mary Rollefson met with Casey Trees to make selections.

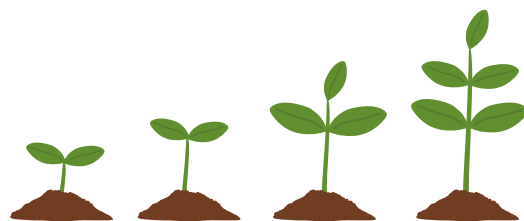
Casey Trees is a Washington DC-based nonprofit, established in 2001 by Betty Brown Casey, committed to restoring, enhancing, and protecting the tree canopy of the nation's capital. To fulfill this mission, they plant trees, engage thousands of volunteers of all ages in tree planting and care, provide year-round continuing education courses, monitor the city's tree canopy, develop interactive online tree tools and work with elected officials, developers, and community groups to protect and care for existing trees and to encourage the addition of new ones.

The story of Washington DC's trees extends back to our first President, George Washington, a tree-lover and accomplished horticulturalist who chose the city's location and the man who originally designed it — Pierre L'Enfant. Planned to support a lush tree canopy with ample green spaces and tree-lined boulevards, DC still boasts more green space per capita than most major cities in the United States. Some consider DC the birthplace of arboriculture due to the tens of thousands of trees planted here in the 1800s, which earned DC its nickname, the "City of Trees."

Estimated to support approximately 50 percent tree canopy in 1950, DC's canopy in 2001 declined to just over 35 percent. A *Washington Post* article chronicling this decline encouraged Betty Brown Casey, a longtime area resident, to establish Casey Trees in 2002 with its mission: "To restore, enhance, and protect the tree canopy of the nation's capital."

Since then, Casey Trees has set a goal of attaining 40 percent canopy by 2032; planted over 30,000 trees; educated thousands of residents about the importance of urban tree canopy; supported the tree planting efforts of the DC Government, the National Parks Service, community groups and residents alike; inventoried and tracked the District's tree resources to promote continued public funding for DC's trees; advocated for green, tree-friendly development and similar pursuits.

Trees have already been planted on St. Luke's and Wesley Campuses of National UMC Metropolitan Memorial trees will be planted on March 16, 8 am until noon for those who would like to come out to cheer on volunteers!



What is General Conference?

General Conference is comprised of United Methodist clergy and lay delegates who are elected from annual, missionary, and provisional conferences around the world. This representative body is the only one that can set official policy and speak for the denomination. General Conference gathers for a 10-day meeting every four years. (General Conference did not meet in 2020 because of covid).

MAJOR ISSUES OF the 2024 GENERAL CONFERENCE

The 2024 General Conference comes as the denomination is grappling with the withdrawal of more than 7,600 U.S. congregations from The United Methodist Church, about a quarter of U.S. churches. Whether that church-exit policy will be extended beyond 2023 or expanded to include churches outside the United States will be up to General Conference. The same is true for any change in the denomination's policies related to LGBTQ people.

The lawmaking assembly faces many proposals dealing with topics as varied as the denomination-wide budget, social teachings, ecumenical relations and international structure.

All told, General Conference has received 1,100 properly submitted petitions — basically the United Methodist equivalent of bills before a legislature.

Several petitions propose **regionalization**. Regionalization would put the U.S. and (international) central conferences on equal footing in church decision-making. Each region would have the authority to adapt the Book of Discipline to its own context. Regionalization is an especially critical issue for reconciling congregations such as National, because if regionalization is adopted, it is more likely that the U.S. region could remove the anti-LGBTQ language in the current Book of Discipline.

NUMC participants who desire to keep up with the day-to-day happenings at General Conference can rely on UM News' General Conference News and Commentary page to provide the latest information and updates as they are available. Subscribing to the Daily Digest makes it easy to stay in-the-know, as it delivers the latest news directly to email inboxes.

Our annual conference will share ongoing updates, often with context that will help us understand how the business of General Conference relates to our region and our congregation. <https://www.bwcumc.org/event/21910249-2024-04-23-general-conference/>

UNITED METHODIST GENERAL CONFERENCE



April 23 - May 3, 2024

[View Video explanation on General Conference HERE.](#)



Share the Joy of Easter

With Your Gift or Pledge to Support the Ministries of National UMC

Easter is the most joyous season of the Christian year, and you can share that joy with others by making a gift in support of National UMC's life-changing ministries of worship, learning, service, and nurture.

Here are five simple ways you can experience the joy of generosity in this special season.

1. Pledge your financial support for the balance of 2024. It's not too late!

A pledge is not a binding contract but rather a promise between you and God that helps you grow in faith and generosity by becoming more regular in the spiritual discipline of giving. Your pledge also helps the church plan more accurately and steward our collective financial resources more faithfully. You can submit a pledge [online](#).

nationalchurch.org/commitment-2024

2. Set up a recurring electronic gift.

You can also establish a regular pattern of giving through National UMC's [online giving portal](#). If you are already giving in this manner, please consider whether you might be in a position to increase the level of your gift at this time.

nationalchurch.org/give

3. Make a "second mile" gift.

If you are already pledging or giving regularly, please consider an additional "second mile" gift to mark the season of Easter and indicate your continued commitment to the mission of National UMC.

4. Make a special Easter gift online.

If you are not ready or able to make a pledge or give on a recurring basis, you can make a one-time [gift online](#) at any time, from any place, in any amount. Please offer your gift online today! nationalchurch.org/give

5. Make a special Easter offering as you worship during this holy season.

Giving is one of the ways we worship God. There will be special Easter offering envelopes distributed with Worship bulletins on March 17, 24, and 31. Please give generously as giving is an act of faith in God.

